Bombings resume; al-Qaida forces choose to die

TORA BORA, Afghanistan—US bombers were back in action yesterday in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan after besieged al-Qaida forces of Osama bin Laden failed to meet a surrender-or-die deadline and put forth conditions for laying down their arms.

Sporadic bursts of heavy machine-gun fire, apparently from US-backed tribal eastern alliance forces, also echoed through the area—less than 24 hours after the truce took effect.

Journalists were barred from entering the battlefield area, where an undetermined number of al-Qaida fighters were holed up in a desolate

BOMBINGS/ A12

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2001 ★ 42 PAGES 4 SECTIONS VOL.17 NO. 5 P15

Poor middle class to pay more for rent

**By Carlito Pablo
and Rocky Nazareno**

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo, who has resorted to various gimmicks and has come up with several programs to woo the poor, may be risking alienating the lower and middle classes who cannot afford to pay higher rent for their dwellings.

POOR/ A13

WTR
without
borders

GROUND zero: Terrorists struck here in New York (at right) which activated intense US bombings on Afghanistan devastating Omar Mullah's compound (left) in Kandahar, among other vital targets. AFP/GETYY IMAGES

Drilon, Roco in coco row

PCGG: Accra lawyers must identify real owners of holding firms

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Donna S. Cueto

THE SINS of the past committed against the small coconut farmers may be catching up with the former Accra lawyers who incorporated two of 10 holding companies that bought San Miguel shares using coco levy funds.

They are currently key allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Former Solicitor General Francisco I. Chavez identified Senate President Franklin Drilon and Education Secretary Raul Roco as incorporators of First Meridian Development and Rock Steel Resources.

Sen. Edgardo Angara was then one of Accra's founding partners during the Marcos years.

The holding firms were reportedly used by businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. to acquire a strategic stake in San Miguel in the early 1980s. He now chairs the food and beverage giant.

Drilon refused to be interviewed for this story.

Chavez identified Drilon and Roco amid the controversy generated by the proposed compromise settlement of the coco levy shares in San Miguel that several coconut farmers' groups and the Philippine Federation of Coconut Producers (Cocofed) signed last Oct. 28.

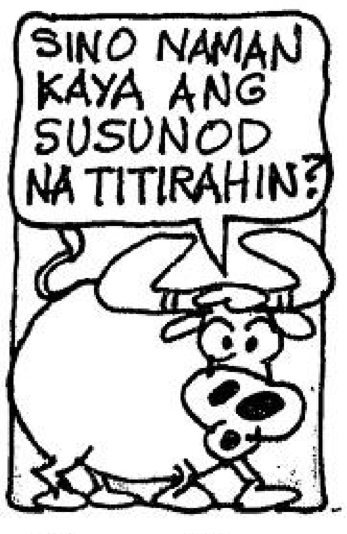
The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) has rejected the proposed compromise deal although it has expressed willingness to hear proposals from Cojuangco for a compromise agree-

DRILON/ A12

ROCO: Only represented sellers and was unaware of the principal behind buyer of San Miguel shares.

DRILON: No comment

ANGARA: Law firm set up a complex corporate structure to conceal beneficial owners of companies.



Opposition: Tiglao 'talks too much'

**By Cynthia Balana
and Dona Pazzibugan**

NOW opposition senators are training their guns on President Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson.

Sen. Luisa Ejercito, wife of ousted President Joseph Estrada, yesterday said

OPPOSITION/ A12

Ani moves closer to impeachment

**By Christine Avendaño,
Michael Lim Ubac
and Juliet L. Javellana**

OMBUDSMAN Aniano Desierto inched closer to being impeached after the House committee on justice voted yesterday that the complaint lawyer Ernesto Francisco Jr. had filed against Desierto was "sufficient in form."

"I have hurdled the first stage and I am now looking forward to the day when I can present my evidence," enthused Francisco.

Francisco has charged Desierto of bribery, betrayal of public trust and culpable violation of the Constitution after the Ombudsman allegedly accepted a bribe from the lawyer's ex-client Luke Roxas in exchange for sitting on a case in 1997.

Both Desierto and Roxas, the controlling stockholder of several companies, including the ASB Realty, have denied the accusation that the former took from the latter P273,000 worth of video camera parts and P500,000 in cash.

Of the 58 members and ex-officio members of the committee, 34 voted in favor of Francisco's com-

ANI/ A12

3 sisters beg Gloria: Please help our papa

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Three young sisters, whose father is among five Filipinos languishing in a Kuwaiti jail for the death of a Canadian engineer, are pinning their hopes on President Macapagal-Arroyo to make their Christmas wish come true.

Rhoda Mae, 14, and 13-year-old twins Sherryl Joy and Shenny Pearl said they wanted their father, Teody Tomaro, to come home for Christmas.

"We are only ordinary children who want to have a Christmas gift from you—to be with our father,"

3 SISTERS/ A12

Palace: Nur not going to another country

By Carlito Pablo

MALAYSIA will not turn over Nur Misuari to another country if the Philippines does not take him back on Dec. 24.

"We have had assurance and we are very confident that the Malaysian government will not turn him over to any third party," Rigoberto Tiglao, spokesperson for President Macapagal-Arroyo, said yesterday at a briefing he conducted jointly with National Security Adviser Roilo Golez.

The two men did not appear worried about the reported statement by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad that his government would let Misuari go somewhere else if the Philippines did not take him back in time. Misuari was arrested in Sabah along with six associates on Nov. 24, and Malaysia had earlier warned that he would be held for illegal entry for only 30 days.

"We've been saying that as soon as the Malaysians are finished with him, we expect Mr. Misuari to be repatriated," Tiglao said. "I haven't seen that statement that says he would have to return on Dec. 24. That's fine with us."

Golez said "protocols for the transfer" of the ex-governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao had started "because we know that the time is very limited."

PALACE/ A13

SAGISAG
PILIPINAS

VAL HANDUMON

BEST AND BRIGHTEST

"Sources of national pride," President Macapagal called the recipients of the Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) during award rites at the Palace on Tuesday night. With the President from left: Leocasio Sebastian for plant breeding and genetics category; Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez, public service in print media and advocacy; Dr. Jaime Montoya, infectious disease; Bernido Liu, business entrepreneurship; Edgardo Jose Martin aka Gary Valenciano, contemporary music; Juan Sajid Imao, sculpture; Enrique Filamor of the Philippine Jaycees; Judy Roxas, TOYM chairperson; Roberto Barreiro, public service in the broadcast media; Divina Delasin representing her sister Dorothy Joy Delasin, sports; Josia Go, business education; Samira Gutoc, youth leadership in social and cultural development; and Risa Hontiveros-, Baraquel, peace advocacy.

BAKASYON MUNA!

Blue ribbon to clear Mike A of bribery

BY CYNTHIA D. BALANA

THE SENATE blue ribbon committee is inclined to exonerate First Gentleman Mike Arroyo from the charge that he accepted a P40-million bribe from two telecommunications franchisees in exchange for the recall of the presidential veto.

At the same time, the committee would file perjury charges against businessman Pacifico Marcelo for giving false testimony before the committee.

Sen. Joker Arroyo, committee chair, said that Marcelo himself cleared Mr. Arroyo when he told the committee that no bribery ever took place in his company's applications for congressional franchise.

Arroyo said the Senate resolution that was referred to his committee was to find out if there was truth to the alleged P40-million bribe accepted by the First Gentleman.

He said the committee was not able to prove the allegation and that even Marcelo, the principal owner of the companies allegedly involved in bribery, denied there was a bribe.

But Marcelo implicated President Macapagal-Arroyo when he said that it was she who demanded 51 percent control of one of his companies in exchange for the recall of the veto.

The President, through presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao, admitted that the meeting took place but denied that she asked for majority control of Marcelo's company.

Committee members agreed that it was a case of the President's word against Marcelo's since there was no other witness in that one-on-one meeting in Malacañang.

Arroyo said the committee will terminate the investigation next week after hearing the testimonies of three other "stranded witnesses" who were all former employees of Marcelo.

He said the investigation has branched out into different topics when the focus of the inquiry should be on the content of the resolution itself.

LACK OF QUORUM

Erap trial suspended, to resume in January

BY VOLT CONTRERAS

SANDIGANBAYAN Justice Teresita de Castro yesterday suspended the historic corruption trial of jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada until January amid mounting obstacles.

De Castro, who took over as acting chair of the 3rd Division from suspended Associate Justice Anacleto Badoy, canceled yesterday's hearing and two remaining trial proceedings this month because of a lack of a quorum.

The trial was set to resume Jan. 7.

The Estrada trial was actually due for a long break as the court will be taking its traditional Christmas holiday vacation during which no hearings are scheduled.

But following the Supreme Court's surprise ruling last Tuesday ordering Badoy to go on indefinite leave and barring him from presiding over the Estrada trial, many issues have emerged.

For instance, would the Estrada cases be raffled off again? Will the deposed president's trial for economic plunder again suffer delays over legal questions stemming from the constant change in the bench's composition?

Badoy's removal from the plunder trial, which began Oct. 1, is one of several problems hounding the first-ever corruption trial of a Philippine president.

The trial has been mired in weeks of legal wranWith Badoy complying with the leave order starting yesterday, the three-seat 3rd Division could not immediately get a "warm body" to act as his replacement for the 1:30 p.m. hearing.

In the Dec. 3 and 5 hearings, which Badoy missed because of ill health, 4th Division chair Associate Justice Narciso Nario sat in for Badoy.

Yesterday, however, a court official said Nario was "out of the building and could not be reached" in time for the hearing.

Estrada lawyer Rene Saguisag has already warned that he would raise "valid due process concerns" if Badoy's absence would result in an irregular set of magistrates in future hearings.

Saguisag said the trial cannot just proceed "if in every hearing we will find a replacement (for Badoy)."

"We cannot just be casual about it or else what we will have is a convenience-store style of serving justice."

The trial would suffer from infirmities, for example, if an absentee justice who failed to watch a witness' "demeanor" on the stand eventually gives a judgment based merely on the transcript, he said.

Asked whether the defense team would seek a re-raffle of the case, Saguisag said they did not want to preempt the court's decision.

Ombudsman Aniano Desierto said cases are usually raffled off again if the presiding justice voluntarily inhibits himself or if the Supreme Court orders it.

Badoy explains TV appearance

BY MICHAEL LIM UBAC

JUSTICE Anacleto D. Badoy Jr., the suspended Sandiganbayan 3rd Division chair, has defended himself against accusations of improper conduct when he was rushed out of the Sandiganbayan in an ambulance on Nov. 29 only to be taken to the GMA-7 television station for an interview.

Badoy, who was forced to go on an indefinite leave by the Supreme Court last Tuesday, defended his decision to be interviewed live over GMA-7 television, saying the "gravity of the situation" compelled him to go on air to inform the public about a missing "unpromulgated" ruling.

He said his deteriorating physical condition required the use of an ambulance.

Badoy's arguments were contained in a 10-page compliance he submitted to the SC a day before the Supreme Court handed down a resolution declaring him on leave until it resolves the two administrative complaints against him.

Copies of the letter were given to reporters yesterday.

₱1.14 cut in oil prices seen

BY RONNEL W. DOMINGO

CONSUMERS should expect oil price cuts totaling P1.14 per liter this month, including a 47-centavos-per-liter reduction that the oil companies should have implemented in November, industrialist Raul Concepcion said yesterday.

Concepcion, who chairs the private sector-led Consumer and Oil Price Watch, said the oil companies should have reduced prices by 77 centavos per liter last month but did so by 30 centavos only.

Concepcion called on the oil companies to implement this week the 47-centavo balance of the reduction due last November and explain the delay to consumers.

He said all that was being asked of the oil firms was greater transparency in pricing.

"We are still waiting (for them to give us) the computation for the increase in insurance premium, freight costs and dealers' margins," Concepcion said.

He said explaining these figures would go a long way in making the public understand the rationale behind oil price changes.

Concepcion said another 60-centavos-per-liter rollback is to be expected on Dec. 21 as average crude prices in November were cheaper by $1.96 compared to the previous month, while the peso depreciated by 23 centavos in those months.

Crude prices averaged $17.67 per barrel in November compared to $19.63 in October.

The peso went down from P51.76 to the US dollar in October to P51.99 in November.

Concepcion said the December price decrease was already owed the consumers and should not be affected by changes in world crude prices this month.

The changes in international crude prices this month would be reflected in January prices, he said.

Energy Secretary Vicente Perez last week said additional price cuts were to be expected within the month following the 30-centavo-per-liter rollback on Dec. 3.

He welcomed the 30-centavo rollback but said he had expected more.

"Two major oil companies have assured me that they anticipate having additional decreases in the month of December," Perez said.

Asked how much the additional decreases should be, the secretary said: "We don't want to give out a pricing benchmark because we don't want to end up setting up the pricing. It is a free market."

Pagcor replies to suit

THE PHILIPPINE Amusement and Gaming Corp. said yesterday it complied with all legal and financial requirements when it suspended jai alai operations on June 20.

The statement was in response to an INQUIRER story last week about the claim of the Jai Alai Off-Fronton Operators Association (JOOA) that close to P100 million in agency fees remained unrefunded.

In a two-page counter-affidavit to the suit filed by JOOA with the Ombudsman, Pagcor Chair Efraim Genuino said he acted within the 15-day prescribed period set by law to respond to complaints of this nature.

NEWSBRIEFS

Priest's release talks stalled

MALACAÑANG said yesterday negotiations for the release of Italian priest Fr. Guiseppe Pierantoni have been stalled after the Pentagon gang which is holding him demanded "board and lodging" payments. National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said talks with the gang had been initiated on condition that Pierantoni would be released without any concessions.

"Because of their demand, the talks were stopped," Golez told Palace reporters.

Golez and presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao also denied reports that an "aide" to President Macapagal-Arroyo had offered to make the payment to the Pentagon. "It was the other way around. It's the Pentagon gang that is demanding payment for 'board and lodging,'" Golez said. *Carlito Pablo*

Collusion probe to be reopened

THE HOUSE defense committee will reopen its investigation into the alleged collusion between the military and the Abu Sayyaf over reported ransom payments. The committee will invite Sen. Sergio Osmeña III to testify on allegations he made that businessman Reghis Romero II had paid P17 million for his and two others' release in Patikul, Sulu.

Part of the money, Osmeña had charged, went to certain military officials.

Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. (Lakas, Surigao del Sur) said that even if the committee hearings on the alleged collusion had ended and a report is about to be issued, the inquiry would be reopened to hear Osmeña. *Juliet L. Javellana*

Prayer, fasting on Dec. 14

ARCHBISHOP Orlando Quevedo, Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines president, yesterday enjoined Filipino Catholics to observe Pope John Paul II's declaration of Dec. 14 as a "Day of Fasting, Prayer and Charity for Peace."

In a circular, Quevedo asked all bishops to conduct "appropriate liturgical activities" with the faithful on that date and to encourage them to "share materially with those who are suffering." Quevedo also reminded the faithful about the Pope's declaration that "prayer acquires power if it is joined with fasting and almsgiving."

The Pope had asked that what is saved by fasting be donated to the poor, especially those who are suffering the consequences of terrorism and war. *Armand N. Nocum*

Gov't-NDF truce dates clarified

LUCENA CITY—The National Democratic Front said yesterday the "clear effectivity" dates of the proposed ceasefire with the government would be from Dec. 15 to Jan. 6.

"It is the time frame within which the ceasefire (proposals) of both the NDF and the government are concurrent," Luis Jalandoni, NDF peace panel chair, said in reply to an INQUIRER query.

The NDF issued the statement after President Macapagal-Arroyo declared on Monday that a unilateral Christmas ceasefire with the communist guerrillas would take effect Dec. 10 to Jan. 6. The NDF had proposed a ceasefire from Dec. 15 to Jan. 15. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Labor chief to lobby for Pinays' pay

LABOR Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas will fly to Hong Kong next week to lobby against the planned cut in the wages of more than 150,000 Filipino domestic helpers there.

"I will hold talks with the secretary of labor of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region next week. The minister of transmigration and manpower of Indonesia is also scheduled to be there," Sto. Tomas told dzRH radio.

The former British territory, on the brink of a recession, is considering a proposal to reduce the minimum monthly pay of 233,110 foreign domestic workers of about US$470 by up to 21.6 percent. Filipinos numbering 155,330 make up the largest group among domestic helpers in Hong Kong, who also include Indonesians, Thais and other nationalities. *AFP*

HOLIDAY SHOPPING Surges at the MANILA POLO CLUB

"I find the right mix of items for the Holidays," says Ms. Imelda Ilacad during the NOEL Christmas Bazaar last October. With the proliferation of bazaars around the metropolis, there comes the discretion on which particular event will truly satisfy the holiday shopper.

Despite the economic and the political disturbances, there is an observable number of shoppers visiting the weekend bazaar. People will simply have to find the time to run several errands and attend to numerous engagements which accompany the season.

Christmas is definitely in the air and is then greeted with the second NOEL Christmas Bazaar to be held for the last time this year at the Manila Polo Club on December 15 and 16. Each member of the family, young and old can simply find things that befit their needs.

Hundreds of products pooled together are reasonably priced and may even stretch the capacity of the degrading Philippine currency. At a very tight budget of 1,000 pesos, Mrs. Marifi Maring and Mrs. Nela Foz, visitors at NOEL last October and full time homemakers were able to purchase scented candles from Kyles's Candle and Crafts, dinner table trimmings from Georgani and low fat cookies from KitcheA la Ching. A thorough walk alongside tables of gift items will allow the meticulous shopper to find colored garrison belts, little pouches and unique geisha tops.

While the working girl may stretch their salaries on the latest fashionable clothing from NUI Designs Clothing, the sporty teenager may find a new pair of running shoes from Little Hongkong within their allowance. Moreover, the male leader of the family could then easily book a trip to the Aklan beaches through the Pearl of the Pacific or invest his earnings in real estate through MegaWorld Corp.

With the times that tell us to make ends forcibly meet, the NOEL Christmas Bazaar is the opportunity to serve the causes of the Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation which fights for the remembrance of 116 proclaimed heroes and martyrs in a monument at the corner of EDSA and Quezon Avenue and fulfills the objective to start a scholarship fund for the children-martyrs left behind.

An essential Yuletide destination for the avid shopper, this event is supported by the partnership of the GMA Network and Cali along with Grepalife Assurance Corp., Pacific Plans, Pearl of the Pacific, Nextel Communications, INQ7 and the Philippine Daily Inquirer. For more information, call CUT Unlimited at 620-4328 or email: eventsonly@edsamail.com.ph.

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4 more Cabinet members confirmed

By C. D. Balana

FOUR more Cabinet members yesterday passed the Commission on Appointments, bringing to 11 the total number of department secretaries confirmed.

Getting the nod of the bicameral committee in the plenary were Energy Secretary Vicente Perez, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor and Interior Secretary Jose Lina.

Earlier confirmed were Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, Public Works Secretary Simeon Datumanong, Education Secretary Raul Roco, Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman, Agrarian Reform Secretary Hernani Braganza, Trade Secretary Mar Roxas and Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said he expects more secretaries to be confirmed during the last plenary session of the CA on Dec. 19.

He said that committee hearings on the appointments will continue for one more week.

The committee on national defense and security had earlier moved to recommend the confirmation of Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and Armed Forces Chief Gen. Diomedio Villanueva.

The move, however, was held in abeyance after Senators Sergio Osmeña III and Edgardo Angara posed reservations on the appointments.

The committee has scheduled a final hearing to hear the reservations before recommending to put the appointments to a vote in the plenary.

Also confirmed were seven new ambassadors, nine chiefs of mission, seven career ministers and 19 foreign service officers.

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OPINION

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New politics

EDITORIALS

NEARLY 10 years into their protracted term, Sangguniang Kabataan incumbents will yet see their term extended again. There has been a snowballing movement to suspend anew the election because the Commission on Elections is a shambles and the government and the nation are preoccupied with the business of surviving.

If things don't improve, the nation will have to be contented with rewriting the acronym of the SK to Sangguniang Katandaan. Already the average age of SK members nationwide is 24, which is beyond the limit of 21 years set by the Local Government Autonomy Law that created the youth council. A legislative amendment to reformulate youth to encompass dotage is simply farfetched.

Once the showcase of the country's new political blood, the SK has become a display window for the nation's inability to put its politics aright. For example, it cannot even act decisively on when to finally hold new elections. The 10 years of hemming and hawing serve to underscore the lack of political will that has plagued several administrations and perennially cast the country in a state of disrepair and stagnancy.

Not that pushing through with the elections will prefigure a coming of age, the welcome change from the politics of old. As the INQUIRER's recent in-depth report on the SK showed, what was envisioned by the authors of the Local Government Autonomy Law to infuse new blood into the body politic has become nothing but the same old blood albeit with a younger face.

Old politics obtain even in the arena of new politics. In many instances, this is true in a starkly literal sense: children of old politicians have won SK posts so that the SK has become another demesne of nepotism and dynastic politics.

In other instances, SK members have fought ugly battles over pork barrel. Some of them have become cozy with contractors and dispense largesse based on the size of the commissions they will receive. In short, SK members have become Dorian Grays, their youth and sunny faces somehow masking the oppressiveness and corruption of our politics.

Perhaps the perks they have acquired for a decade explain why despite the propensity of the youth not to accept things as they are, SK members have hardly complained that they have long been overstaying in their posts.

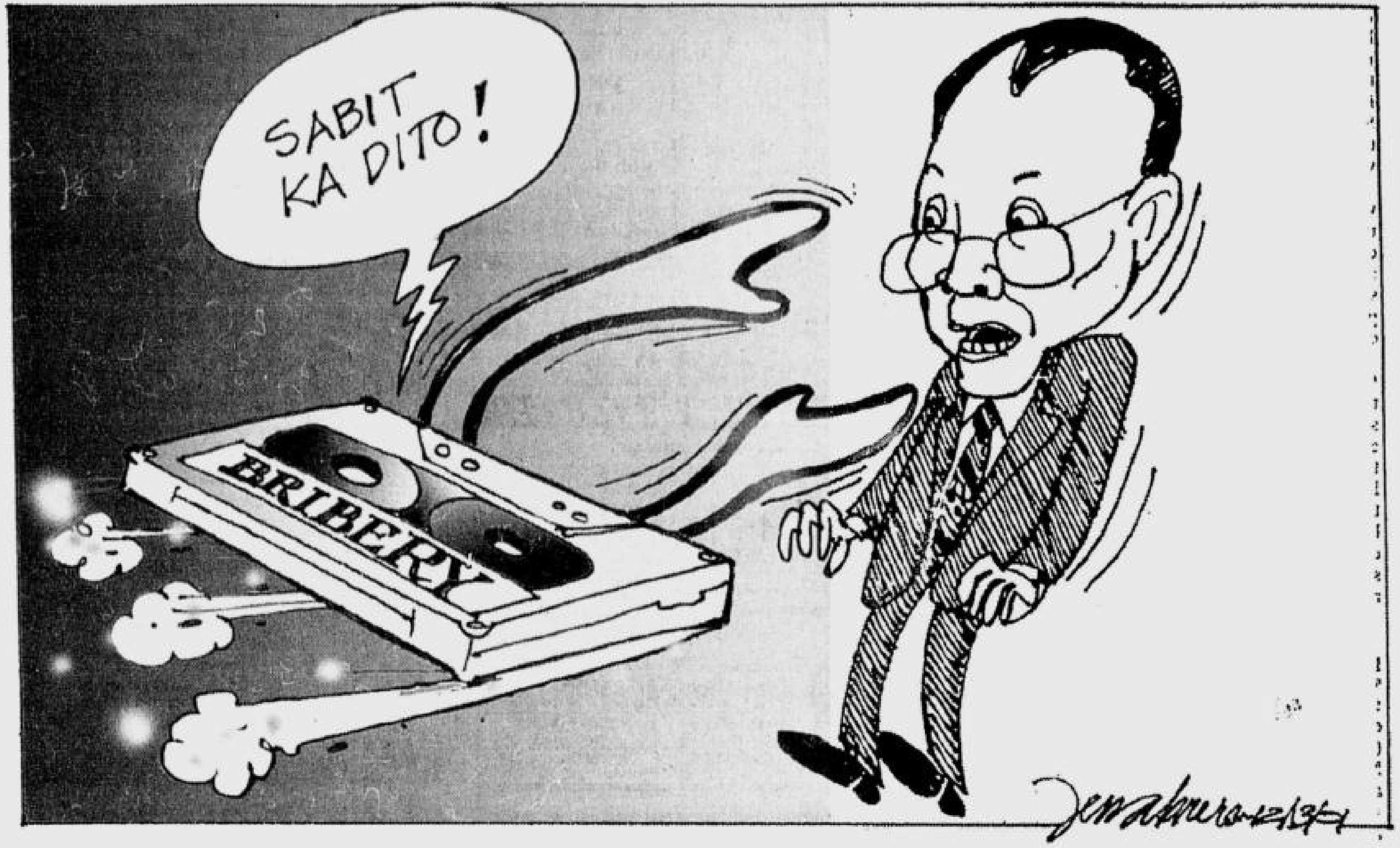
Old politics

THUS, SK incumbents cannot be expected to move for an election. It is up to the government, whose members may have relatives in the SK, to do so. But before it makes the decision, perhaps an accounting is in order. Has the SK realized the promise of its vision? Or has it made the fulfillment of the promise even more remote?

Any review will have to consider the nature and function of the SK, which is supposed to rear the young in the rudiments of political leadership while fulfilling the participatory dimension of a democracy. This early, the score has been mixed, if not paltry. If the SK members have been educated for leadership, it is in a school of patronage politics, pork barrel and kickbacks. If the SK has given flavor to participatory democracy, it is the bitter flavor of exclusivism and entitlement. If the SK has been planned to be a form of check and balance to the adult barangay, municipal, city and provincial councils, the sordid dynamics of Philippine politics, its predisposition toward dynastic conservation and horse-trading, may have transformed the SK into another instrument of cooptation and accommodation.

Perhaps this is as good a time as any to rethink public policy toward the youth and how best to initiate them to the body politic. To be sure, the showcases of adult politics—the executive and the legislature on both national and local levels—have not exactly been paragons of public service. That may be enough warning at this point: why initiate the young at a very early age in the public sector where their idealism and inexperience will only be prey to the depredations of old politics? Why throw pearls before swines?

The government should decide now. It could of course postpone once more the elections and allow the extendees to remain. The prospect will at least be interesting. In two or three years, their faces will meld with the old so that there won't be any distinction between old and new politics. Our politics will then be one of uniformity, a partnership in crime.



Peace and order also needed at Comelec

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

COMMISSION on Elections Chair Alfredo Benipayo and Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco who, I was told, don't even talk to each other at the Comelec, sat beside each other at the Kapihan sa Manila last Monday and talked to each other. They disagreed vehemently. Commissioner Resurreccion Borra rounded out the triumvirate of guests.

Paradoxically, although they disagreed throughout the forum, they all have the same goal: to have clean and honest elections. It is how to reach that goal that they can't agree on. They have different routes.

Benipayo and Borra, being lawyers, were more concerned with the legality of the modernization of the Comelec. Tancangco, not being a lawyer, is more concerned with its practicality.

Tancangco wants to start by cleaning up the voters' lists. She wants to eliminate flying voters. To do this, she begins with precinct mapping. The present voters' lists, she said, are arranged alphabetically so that at times it is hard to find your polling place. She wants voters of one small area listed together for easy location of their polling places. And also so they know one another. If there is a stranger among them, they would know it right away and foil a potential flying voter.

Tancangco favors the so-called VRIS project which would computerize the voters' lists and issue tamper-proof identification cards to voters. Under this system, it is impossible for a voter to vote twice. The computer would foil him. But this modernization plan will cost P6.5 billion and take 20 years to finish.

That is why Benipayo is not sold to it. His plan is to modernize the counting, finish it in 24 hours with counting machines. Quick counting will prevent cheating. Politicians won't have the time to cheat. What's more, his plan will cost only a few hundred million pesos and can be in place by the 2004 elections. The money available at present for the Comelec modernization is only P1.5 billion. "How can you implement a P6.5 billion project with that?" he asked.

Tancangco countered that the P6.5 billion is not needed for only one year but for the duration of the modernization.

The VRIS project was awarded after a bidding to the Photokina consortium during the previous Comelec. But then Chair Harriet Demetriou refused to implement it for the same reasons that Benipayo gave.

Photokina sued. The case is still in the court. And it is because of the notorious slowness of the courts that the Comelec cannot start the cheaper and faster modernization plan. If the Comelec begins the other plan and the court decides in favor of Photokina, then it will have two very expensive modernization projects.

Tancangco believes, however, that no election can truly be honest unless the voters' lists are cleansed, and that the Benipayo plan will not be able to do that.

The clashing opinions are as different as black and white. The seven commissioners are as sharply divided as the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. The irony is that although Benipayo is the chair, his group of three is always outvoted by Tancangco's group of four commissioners. That is why the Comelec is in disarray and can't do anything—although Tancangco claims that Benipayo does what he wants anyway even if the Comelec en banc does not approve his proposals.

I think the battle lines in the Comelec have hardened and the President should step in as a peacemaker even if the Comelec is an independent constitutional body. If peace was the clamor at the economic summit in the Manila Hotel's Fiesta Pavilion last Monday, there was no peace at the Roma across the lobby where Benipayo, Tancangco and Borra were debating. But peace is what is badly needed at the Comelec. Never has that body been so divided. And the 2004 elections are fast approaching. Can you imagine what would happen to our democracy if what happened during the ARMM elections is repeated nationwide during the presidential elections? The President should call an election summit before it is too late.

Or she can call the two groups to Malacañang and tell them to settle their differences and work together for the good of the country the same way President Marcos summoned the feuding Doroy Valencia and Kerima Polotan-Tuvera to the Palace and told them to stop their very public quarrel.

And I think Benipayo and Tancangco can bury their personality problems for the good of the nation. They both want the same thing anyway: to have clean elections. So why can't they work together to achieve that?

* * *

KAPIHAN NOTES—Topic for next Monday's Kapihan sa Manila, the last for the year, is the controversial Coco Levy Fund. Should it go to the government, to be spent to help the ailing coconut industry, or given directly to private persons? But "private persons" does not necessarily mean the small coconut farmers. The lion's share will go to big businessmen and big landowners who have already bought the coco levy receipts on which would be based the refunds. And many of the small farmers, who need help the most, were not issued any receipts in the first place.

The invited panelists are Chair Haydee Yorac of the Presidential Commission on Good Government which has sequestered the coco levy funds, former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile who started the levy and Philippine Coconut Administrator Danilo Coronacion.

* * *

Comments are welcome at asiseeit@pacific.net.ph

Nadirs

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

SOMEONE once told me this story about a group of indigenous people somewhere in the south. I won't identify the group lest it be made an object of ridicule.

My friend was from Manila and was doing environmental work in the area. He was driving a jeep one day when he chanced upon the group walking along a narrow and dusty road, lugging huge baskets on their backs. Seeing that the baskets contained bananas, he stopped and said he wanted to buy some. Sure, they said, and asked him how many baskets he wanted. He laughed and said, no, all he wanted was a few bunches. Their faces fell, and they said that if that was all he needed, he could just take what he could carry.

This was the early 1990s. As it turned out, the group expected to make only around P7 from each basket, which was almost the size of the man carrying it. That would be all the reward for a day's work that included trekking for hours up and down rugged mountain trails, and taking in the lash of sun or rain. It was early morning, and they were on their way to the market. By nightfall, they would be trekking home with a lighter load and even lighter spirits, bringing with them their precious bills and coins carefully wrapped in handkerchiefs.

A public official from that place would tell me later the story was completely true. Barter still flourished in that part of the world. Cash was rare, and was highly valued. As were goods: sardines were especially so. The indigenous group there left nothing unconsumed in a can of sardines. The can itself was turned into various functional or decorative objects, and the oil from the sardines was used as—which is why I'd rather not name the group—pomade. It was not a source of embarrassment to sport hair smelling of sardines, it was a source of pride. The tribe flaunted it.

I remembered this story, strangely enough, when I saw the coverage of the Socio-Economic Summit last Monday on TV. When I heard the speeches of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and other top public officials and the commentaries of the finely attired participants afterward. The whole affair was meant to beam a message of hope to the nation. To say that the leaders of the country were bent on rescuing the populace from dire poverty and bringing the country back on its feet. But I don't know that it didn't beam a message of alienation to the nation instead. One that said the leaders of this country had absolutely no clue about what was happening outside their small, brightly-lit, enclaves, or enclosures, where people spoke a different language from the Greek they did.

Ms Macapagal in particular said something in her speech that I thought encapsulated the whole problem. Peace and order was obviously a problem that affected economic development, she said, and so she was also holding a security or intelligence summit early next year to map out strategies against crime, rebellion and coup plots. Just as well, adversarial politics was harming economic development, she said, and so she was holding a political summit as well in six months' time to forge a basis of unity among this country's warring political factions. But the socio-economic summit by itself was already good enough, bringing as it did the economic players to agree to unite in a common action to push the country forward.

That was what Fidel V. Ramos also did during his time: hold one summit after another, which brought the country no nearer to solving its economic, political and peace and order problems than when it began. It only saw them worsen. I do not know why we always think that when a problem gets out of hand, the best way to solve it is from above, by means of a summit. Or by appointing "czars." Power fails, and we immediately think of appointing an energy czar. Crime riots, and we immediately think of appointing an anti-crime czar (which was what Panfilo Lacson was as head of the PACC). The economy fizzles, and we immediately think of appointing an economic czar. Garbage festers, and we immediately think of appointing a garbage czar. But as Lacson shows—but which the Russians could have told us well over a century ago—czars only tend to become despotic.

Is there another way to go about it?

Of course there is. Which is its exact opposite, or to look at things from below. I've always thought we could do with a variation of what China did to its intellectuals in the 1970s and 1980s, which was to send them to the hinterlands to do manual work. The Chinese campaign of course was ideologically motivated—the intellectuals who were sent to the farms or factories or mines were thought to be ideological deviants who needed "remolding"—which we may want to avoid like the plague.

But the practice itself of making technocrats—or indeed the whole of a country's elite—see and hear and smell and touch and even taste the life "out there" is an enlightened one. It should certainly give our economic managers a sense of realism about poverty—and a terrible sense of urgency to solve it—that they do not have now. It should at least make them see, with the shock of recognition, that economics is not about numbers, it is about people. It is not about dollars and cents, it is about life and death.

I have personally seen the wonders that "immersion" does to people. Even the ones coming from unexpected sources, like the Ateneo's volunteer program, where graduates get to spend a year or so in truly impoverished communities. The graduates come out of there knowing more than they might have gotten from graduate school, and certainly more than what they got before graduation. None of it puts many letters after their names, but a great deal of it puts much wisdom inside their minds.

Summits? I should think we'd do better having nadirs.

* * *

Comments are welcome at dequiros@vasia.com

Will opposition agree to a moratorium?

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

IN HER speech at the recent National Socio-Economic Summit, President Macapagal pledged to move the country forward and address the basic needs of the people for more food on their table, roofs over their heads, schools for the children in every barangay and jobs for their parents. If such efforts were left entirely to President Macapagal and her allies, such as former President Ramos, Senate President Franklin Drilon and Speaker Jose de Venecia, perhaps there could be more than a modicum of success. She seems to have a good working relationship with her allies.

In her speech, Ms Macapagal showered Ramos with praise for having hosted the Social Reform Summit some years back. The Social Reform Agenda that came out of that summit, she said, serves until today as the model for the "socio" part of last Monday's summit. It was in this earlier summit where the 20 poorest provinces were identified, prompting a lot of efforts to be focused on them.

Ms Macapagal also cited the efforts of the two leaders of Congress in addressing two urgent needs: the Senate bill filed by Drilon to modernize our cargo shipping and air transport system and De Venecia's efforts to help combat criminality, a major deterrent to economic development, by allocating more funds in the 2002 budget to the reward system for information on perpetrators of major crimes. Cooperation between the executive and legislative branches will be crucial in ensuring that the necessary reform measures are in place so that the summit's goals will be achieved.

* * *

Another reason for being optimistic about the prospects of success is that Ms Macapagal herself works harder than any of her officials. In her address she related that she would often call her officials "late into the night" to get needed data (doesn't she ever sleep?). She called up outgoing Mindanao adviser Paul Dominguez to inquire about something, only to find out that he was with the new ARRM Gov. Parouk Hussin, informing him of the $20-million aid from Washington that the ARRM would get right after his inauguration. Ms Macapagal also called up Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura to check on the latest interest rate (8 percent, the lowest in six years despite the world crisis), and Labor Secretary Pat Sto. Tomas to find out the comparative unemployment rate this year (10.1 percent, down from last year's 11.2 percent).

One thing about working with this lady President: her officials have to be accessible by cell phone (which she uses an awful lot) at all times, but more importantly, they have to have the necessary statistics at their fingertips.

* * *

There are two problems that could affect the administration's efforts to move the country: the peace and order situation and the political opposition. De Venecia's earmarking of funds for an information reward system is concrete evidence that there is a crying need to improve the police's and Armed Forces' intelligence systems. There is a proposal to hold an "intelligence summit" in the near future, presumably to address the intelligence gap and we can only hope it produces better results. The President is obviously not happy with the campaign against both urban lawlessness and the bandits in Mindanao. In fact, she recently scolded top police officials in their own headquarters for failing to give adequate protection to the citizens. The citizens are glad that she's not happy about it. As for the investors, they are definitely daunted by the peace and order situation.

* * *

But perhaps the most critical factor for the success of her socio-economic program is the cooperation of the opposition. At the summit, the President's appeal for a "one-year moratorium on politicking" got the biggest applause. She stressed that in the difficult times we face, "narrow partisan, sectoral and personal interest must yield to the common good." Terming the summit a "triumph of intense cooperation and great patriotism," Ms Macapagal appealed for unity and for all sectors to work together to "dramatically reduce poverty." The question is, will the opposition heed her call for a moratorium?

* * *

Sen. Edgardo Angara, the de facto opposition leader in Congress, was quoted yesterday as opining that the opposition cannot abandon its role of dishing out criticism. But he should realize that nobody is asking the opposition to give up this role. There is a need in any democracy for an opposition. But what the citizens want to see is constructive criticism, not destructive destabilization and efforts to bring down the government out of revenge and hatred.

Over the past months, the opposition has engaged in the politics of vilification and mud-slinging without basis. For instance, the INQUIRER yesterday reported that the Office of the Ombudsman was closing the Mike Arroyo-PCSO case since the key witness, Robert Rivero, who was manipulated by the opposition, never even filed an affidavit or produced any evidence to support his claims. Obviously the opposition's objective was just to rake up mud against Arroyo.

In the case of Pacifico Marcelo, the opposition wants to prolong the hearings despite the fact that five sessions failed to establish anything substantial beyond the allegation first hurled against Mike Arroyo and now against President Macapagal. Marcelo's charges have been refuted by all of his former subordinates.

* * *

But if we despair here of the actuations of the opposition, perhaps we ought to look across the seas. Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel, in his report on the visit of a delegation of Filipino senators and congressmen to the British Parliament last month, spoke about the behavior of the British parliamentarians during one session. He reported that during a half-hour interrogation of Prime Minister Tony Blair, "heckling punctuated not only the questions directed to him but also his answers." Twice the speaker of the House of Commons had to ask that order be maintained.

Pimentel also noted that the way the debates during the question hour are conducted there is a far cry from the way our Congress conducts its own debates. In the United Kingdom, booing and catcalls are apparently an integral part of the debates. Here, Pimentel noted, the moment discussions in the Senate start to heat up, the session is suspended for one minute, thus disrupting "full expression" of the lawmakers' views.

A local political pundit opined, however, that perhaps we could bear such outlandish behavior in our own Congress if there were more substance in the debates. There's courteous behavior here but very vapid debates.

The male beast

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THE CARHOP at a hotel in Manila sneaked a glance at me and then exclaimed: "*Ay* ma'am, *ang galing-galing ninyo dun sa* TV show(Oh Ma'am, you were so good in that TV show)!" But it wasn't the flattery that made my day. Rather, it was something he mentioned just as I was getting into my vehicle. "Do you know," he told me in Filipino, "that while I was watching 'Debate' and heard you talk about domestic violence, especially how the home is turned into a place of danger for women, I immediately texted my wife and apologized to her? I'm not an abusive husband, but sometimes, when I get home a little drunk, *nangungulit ako* (I become a pest). So I texted her and told her how sorry I was for all those times."

I was astounded and moved by this spontaneous confidence, more so because it was unsolicited. When I asked him if I could use his "confession" in a coming column, he asked only that I not reveal his identity or the hotel he worked for.

So it wasn't for effect that he told me this tidbit. And neither was it my first time to hear it. Usually, after a gender orientation before a mixed male and female audience, one man or two or more would inevitably stand up during the evaluation and "confess" that the sessions had opened their eyes to the value of the women in their lives, especially their wives. One provincial journalist was even moved to reveal that on the last night of the workshop, he drove all the way from the resort where we were billeted to their home in the city just to be with his wife and hold a heart-to-heart talk with her. (We teased him mercilessly afterwards that maybe far more than talking took place that night!)

* * *

THE CARHOP and these male workshop participants, as well as many male friends and colleagues, and the men in my own life, continue to reinforce my conviction that men are not the "enemy."

In the struggle against all forms of violence against women and children, but especially domestic violence, I really believe that women cannot hope to make any headway without the partnership and support of men. If they are "part of the problem," then they must of necessity be "part of the solution," too.

Indeed, what women might need to move on to in this struggle is convince men that it is as much in their interest to eradicate all forms of violence in the home and on our streets. A violent society threatens all its members. And violent homes are the laboratories in which anti-social pathogens are bred.

One of the most persistent myths about violence against women is that though men are the most common perpetrators, none of it is really their fault because men "can't help themselves." The basis for this myth, it seems, is that men are beasts, just a little further removed in evolution from primates. Without social controls and behavioral constraints, much of which are enforced by women, men would be driven to act on their impulses, helpless against their hormones, instincts and "drives."

* * *

THIS may very well be the thinking that underlay the Taliban edicts against women. Apparently so sensitive are Afghan men's antennae that they are driven to lust just by the sight of women's eyes, which is why Afghan women were banned even from looking out of the windows of their homes. But if we follow this thinking to its logical conclusion, then shouldn't it be the "beastly" men who should be locked up, blindfolded and castrated so they don't pose a threat to society?

Golda Meir, the late great prime minister of Israel, put the problem in perspective when she said, in response to demands for a curfew on women in the wake of an escalation of rapes: "But it's the men who are committing the rapes. Shouldn't the curfew be for men?"

I've always said that if I were a man, I'd be deeply insulted by the widespread acceptance of this myth of the "uncontrollable" male. For to believe it is to believe that, yes, women are innately superior creatures because they are more rational, with better control of their emotions and impulses, and with a better developed awareness of how we should behave toward each other.

* * *

FROM EXPERIENCE, I do know that the majority of men are not "beasts," and that the abusers, the boors, the narrow-minded autocrats, the control freaks and the "maniacs" are a distinct minority. And yet, why do so many men go along with the myth that serves to excuse men from all responsibility for their violence and immaturity?

Maybe because it's convenient. Though men seek to "behave" at all times, the "male beast" pops up when they do fail to live up to social standards. "The devil made me do it!" a cartoon character says to get out of trouble. Well, maybe the myth of the helpless male is just a more sophisticated version.

That's why the carhop's confession came as such a refreshing revelation. The majority of men are decent and caring, but too often the "better angels of their nature" are drowned out by social imperatives to live up to some mythical but discredited standard of manhood: drinking hard, disrespecting women, talking trash, using violence as a tool to resolve conflicts, abusing power and pelf.

The man on the opposite side of the TV debate sought to create the image of a caring husband and father who was unfortunately saddled by an unstable wife. By all rights, he could lay claim to the respect of society: intellectual prowess, material wealth, political influence and social respectability. But in my book, the carhop, with his spontaneous confession, seems to me the better and preferable role model.

A generous man's last wish

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

SALVADOR Carlos is his name. Before he peacefully breathed his last and passed on to the Eternal Pastures on July 8, he expressed his desire to turn over to farmers 47 hectares of his family's landholdings in Bukidnon.

The property was supposed to be awarded to the Mapalad farmers (remember them?) through the Voluntary Offer to Sell (VOS) scheme of the Department of Agrarian Reform. Alas and alack, this is not about to happen, no thanks to the municipal agrarian reform officer who, we are told, is making things very difficult.

There is reason to believe that there are indeed many generous landowners in this world who are willing to part with their piece of the earth. But there is also reason to believe that there are people who are out to subvert the very task they are paid to do.

Remember the Mapalad farmers of San Vicente, Sumilao, Bukidnon, who went on a hunger strike to dramatize their quest for land? Remember that these farmers lost the case when the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Quisumbings—based on a technicality.

After that great disappointment, the DAR looked in the direction of the Carlos property and declared 19 hectares of that up for grabs. These 19 hectares were to be awarded to the farmers of the Mapalad Multi-Purpose Cooperative. The farmers settled in and have been working there for over a year now.

But 19 hectares are not enough for 62 farmers and their families. So negotiations were made with Carlos for an additional 47 hectares from his property. The talks with him did not prosper because Carlos' health was deteriorating progressively. But this kind landowner wanted to leave this world a happy man. Shortly before he died, he expressed his wish, through his lawyer, to hand over the 47 hectares to the Mapalad farmers.

The Carlos family respected his wish and went to the farmers to announce the good news. Last October, Gigi Carlos, Salvador's widow, along with her son Jose Ignacio, went to Bukidnon to meet with the provincial agrarian reform officer and inform him about her late husband's last wish. Mother and son also met with the farmers and their families who received the news with great rejoicing. Many were moved to tears when they learned how this good man thought of them even at his death bed.

And now, the problem. The distribution of the additional 47 hectares that the late Salvador Carlos wanted to transfer to the farmers through the VOS scheme has been stalled because of the introduction of 12 or more "beneficiaries." MARO Jesus Reyes Edrolin has some explaining to do.

San Vicente's barangay officials say none of the 12 or so is a resident of San Vicente. Among these new "beneficiaries" are: Zalde Eyona, Henrietta Estampador, Oliver Ledesma, Floro Hormigos, Vicentaluz Tacbobo, Marjorie Obico, Joel Jamis, Freddie Cruz, Elena Reyes Jonalyn Espanto, Mark Cortes and Jaime Antonio Reyes.

The Mapalad farmers are shocked that Edrolin has allowed these new faces to enter the area even before he had met with the Mapalad group in early October.

So what does the DAR have to say about this? Can't the Mapalad farmers have peace, if not justice, at last?

* * *

World Bank Environment Monitor on the Philippines. Two days ago the WB came out with its report which said that "solid waste or basura has emerged as the most visible environmental priority in the cities and municipalities of the Philippines." We all know that already, but it is good to have a huge institution say that again to our face.

The report added that the generation of waste is increasing rapidly as consumption rises, while collection efficiencies are dropping as service levels deteriorate.

Here are some terrifying facts and figures. The solid waste generated by households is 10 million tons per year. The toxic and hazardous waste generated by the industrial-commercial sector is 2.4 million tons a year. Hazardous and infectious waste from hospitals is 7,750 tons per year. Urban areas account for 70 percent while rural areas account for 40 percent of collected waste. Only 12 percent of the waste generated in Metro Manila is recycled or reused; 5 percent recycled material is sold.

Number of proper solid waste disposal sites: one landfill, two closed landfills, 17 controlled dumps. Waste incinerators, 43; hazardous waste treatment facilities, 28...and so forth and so on.

Nationally, only 2 percent of the waste generated is disposed in sanitary landfills or controlled dumps. About 10 percent is composted while a very small portion is recycled. The rest go to open dumps.

* * *

Christians against styrofoam. The Kaalagad Katipunang Kristiyano, an ecumenical organization of lay people, religious, pastors and priests, has launched a campaign against the use of styrofoam and plastics in fast-food joints. Their campaign cry: *"Mas at home akong kumain kung hindi sa plastik at styrofoam ihahain!"*

The group's first outing was at a Jollibee branch because, Kaalagad said, "Jollibee has indicated a willingness to help in this noble endeavor." Jollibee's openness, Kaalagad added, will hopefully serve as an example.

These Christian environmentalists brought out their washable plates and utensils and used them while eating Jollibee products. Kaalagad had met with the Jollibee management to present its four-point proposal: (1) use of reusable plates and utensils, (2) continuous introduction of biodegradable packaging (paper cups, etc.) for an eventual phase-out of styrofoam and plastics, (3) allow for a system where customers could bring in their own utensils and discounts offers and tokens for those who do—plus even a lane of their own, (4) strict in-store solid waste management and incentives and awards for efficient branches; discount points for customers who bring back recyclable items (plastic bags, etc.) bearing the Jollibee brand.

Kaalagad plans to visit other fast-food joints this Christmas season.

Abandoned

YOUNGBLOOD

V.B.

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

MAMA ran away with another man when I was 10 years old, and I was never happier in my life. She used to hit me a lot and I hurt all over. She hit me whenever I failed to brush my teeth for more than two minutes. She hit me whenever I forgot to pull the plug after watching TV. And more often than not, she hit me when she and her lover had fights.

She told me several times she could kill me and get away with it. And she kept reminding me that I was the ugliest girl alive.

So, my only regret about her departure was that she took with her my bed, my bankbook, the TV set and my precious set of encyclopedia.

I was forced to live with my father with whom I never had, before that fateful day, the experience of having even a five-minute conversation. He was a gambler who had no ambitions in life and who lived by his winnings and the earnings from the little store my aunt used to manage.

Papa didn't know what to do when he got me. Suddenly he had a responsibility, which was taking care of me.

I slept on a *banig* until we were able to borrow a mattress from an aunt. We had to borrow money for my tuition. I lived a difficult life.

As a gambler's daughter, I learned very quickly that when we had money, we had lots of it, but when we had none, our wallets were bottomless.

It didn't take very long for me to understand why Mama left. She came from an affluent family. She was ambitious and wanted to be as rich as her brothers and sisters. And Papa—well, he was headed for nowhere.

What I couldn't understand was why Mama did not take me with her. She left me with Papa knowing that he couldn't possibly provide me with the things that would give me a chance to have a good future. I hated her. I despised her for leaving me.

Before she left me, Mama was my tutor. Although she was strict, she also knew how to reward good work, and this was a big reason I strove hard to get to the top of my class.

When she left, I studied on my own and studied very hard. I wanted to show her that I didn't need her. I became very competitive. I had no friends and I had a mission. I had little patience with people who stood in my way.

I studied in a parochial school and grew up Catholic although Papa was a Protestant. Those were difficult times for me. It was so hard for a girl to grow up without a mother. When I had my first monthly discharge, I didn't know what to do and I panicked! I never learned girl stuff like boys and clothes.

As for Papa, I thought of him as my moneybag and zombie. He gave me money when he had some, but there were many times when my wallet was thicker than his. I learned to manage my affairs wisely. I knew that if I wanted to finish schooling, I had to save for the rainy days—the days when Papa had no money.

I bagged almost all the awards when I graduated from high school. I was a one-woman act, the leader of all the school organizations, feared by many and respected by the little people who knew and understood my background. The latter were among the very few who became my friends. They knew Mama never called during Christmases, birthdays and holidays.

College forced me to be more sociable. It was also during my college years that I learned forgiveness through my involvement in church activities. I also learned about forgiveness after being hurt so many times. I was no longer the invincible woman. I loved God and served him more. I learned to love and accept my father for the man that he was. I learned to forgive my mother, which was the hardest thing to do in my entire life.

Mama, I learned through gossip, bore a daughter who, to my embarrassment, was sent to the same high school where I graduated from and even tried to bank on my so-called "popularity." Recently she spread the tale that I had dropped out of college after getting pregnant, had an abortion and rushed into marriage.

When I heard about it, I couldn't say what emotion was stronger: the hurt and the anger or the amusement since I graduated as one of the top students in the university and in the country.

My relatives on the mother side used to act as if I didn't exist. But when I landed among the top 10 placers in the board exams for chemical engineers and they read about me in the papers, they started to invite me to their parties and other family gatherings.

However, Mama wants no part in all that. If anyone wants her to put on her fiercest scowl, all he has to do is congratulate her for having a daughter like me.

Papa and I have become closer than ever. I love him. And now that I have finished my course, I can assure him that we will no longer spend days looking for ways to pay off his loans.

Despite all this, I feel like I am one of the luckiest persons alive. My life is entirely in my hands. A lot of doors have been opened for me and I am taking my time sitting back and considering which door I will enter.

People say I am like my mother now. I am her spitting image. We talk with the same voice and like the same things. But I hope the similarities end there. It would be the saddest day of my life if I should wake and realize that I had become my mother.

Now, when people hurt me, I try to understand, accept and forgive. After all, nothing can be harder to forgive than a mother who abandoned you. I don't even know what a mother's love is. But I think I will know when I become a mother myself.

V.B., 22, works with a multinational company and still lives with her father but now shoulders all the household expenses.

THEY SAID

Day of learning

"We need not celebrate Nov. 13 as the day that the impeachment process started. Let's just look at it as an event from which our people should be able to learn lessons from."

—Sen. Joker Arroyo on the day then Speaker Manuel Villar submitted the impeachment complaint to the Senate

Empowerment for OFWs

"Imagine, the overseas Filipino remittances amount to $6 billion to $8 billion a year. This huge amount of remittances certainly entitles them to have a say on who should be running the government."

—President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Challenge

"The most responsible response would be to challenge the good senator to take his goods to court."

—Philippine National Police Chief Gen. Leandro Mendoza on Sen. Panfilo Lacson's exposé linking ranking policemen to "jueteng"

Equality

"A maid's abased social status does not mean that she is any less of a human being and any less protected by the law."

—Singapore's Chief Justice Yong Pung How, warning that employers maltreating maids shall be punished

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Progress founded on truth

WHY is it that at the first sign of an economic downturn, leaders readily insist they have the authority to be shrewd, forceful and manipulative in order to restore stability? The fact is that such an attitude only leads to an abuse of the natural order of things. That is what happened in the United States recently. And it looks like it has started to happen in our own country, though in a slightly different way.

Our leaders insist, for instance, that media must accentuate the good news instead of the bad news—even in the face of a horrible peace and order situation. Doesn't that mean hiding the truth and telling lies instead?

Isn't it sufficiently clear their complaint that reporting the bad news drives the foreign investors away has only blinded them to the fact that it is their own failure to curb corruption in the bureaucracy that has resulted in a bad peace and order condition which in turn drives away the investors? In effect, therefore, they will punish the innocent simply because they can't see their own flaws.

Shall we not then realize once and for all that we cannot thrive and prosper unless we founded ourselves on the truth?—**ERNESTO K. MAGTOTO, Las Piñas City**

Erap deserves the people's respect

THE WAY President Joseph Estrada is being treated is not right. It is alien to the Filipino sense of respect for our elders (and our leaders). Neither is it right in other countries that believe in the democratic way of life.

We Filipinos used to have a very high respect for our elders. The sad fact is that this is waning or slowly going out of style.

I remember that when we were students in the early 1950s and 1960s, we proudly offered our seats to women and the elderly in buses or elsewhere. We seldom see that now. Let us not allow the further erosion of Filipino values.

During an official visit to an Asian country when we were students at the National Defense College, we were told never to criticize their foremost national leaders in public because we could be arrested for it and our host college (their national defense college) would not be able to help us. That was the extent of their respect to their leaders.

Even "savages" have a very healthy respect for rank and leadership. American history tells us that in the Battle of Little Big Horn where General Custer was killed and his army annihilated to the last man, he was not scalped like the others. Even in death, rank has its privileges.

What is wrong with us is that we have presumed that President Estrada is already guilty of the crime or crimes he is charged with. What happens to the maxim that a person is presumed innocent unless proven otherwise, if he is treated like he were guilty?

President Estrada wants to be treated and undergo operation in the United States. Why can't we allow that? Any physician or surgeon will agree that a patient has a better prognosis or rapid recovery if he has trust and confidence in his doctor.

President Estrada is charged with criminal offenses and thus he cannot seek political asylum there. We have an extradition treaty with the United States and therefore he can be repatriated after his medical treatment if he refuses to come home.

I am happy with the little courtesies they give to President Estrada like allowing him and his son Jinggoy to visit the wake of the late Nida Blanca. I am sure many others feel that way too. It reinforces our belief that in a democracy like ours, Filipino social values cannot be eradicated.

Let us accept that Estrada is our former president and therefore he deserves our respect. That is the Filipino way.

He must also be presumed innocent because he has not yet been convicted of any crime. It diminishes us to see an elderly or anyone of high rank or former high rank treated with little respect.—**OMBRA REY A. TAMANO, MNSA, 112-C Scout Ojeda St., Quezon City**

Gun owners as barangay security force

I WISH to thank the INQUIRER for taking issue with my humble proposal at the City Council of Manila. Indeed, I'm glad that my proposal got your attention.

Allow me to state some facts that would help clarify matters in defense of my position to allow responsible licensed gun owners to be part of the Barangay Security Defense Force (BSDF).

First, glaring drug trafficking, robbery, gang war, snatching, pick-pocketing, hold-ups, burglary, homicide and murder happen daily even in broad daylight.

Barangay Chair Diosdado Reyes of Barangay 629 in Sta. Mesa, Manila was shot dead inside the barangay hall last Oct. 18. The killing of Commission on Elections official Velma Cinco was only incidental to my proposed resolution.

Because of the deteriorating peace and order situation, particularly in Manila, I filed on Nov. 22 a resolution that would allow peace-loving, responsible and licensed gun owners in every barangay in the city to be part of the Barangay Self Defense Force to be combined with barangay tanods with rattan sticks in maintaining peace and order in the community. Barangay chairpersons will appoint those who will compose the force because they know very well the character of their constituents. They will undergo seminars in the maintenance of peace and order and other related lectures on their responsibilities and discipline. They will be directly under the supervision of the barangay chairpersons and police officers. The main objective of my resolution is to maintain peace and order by mobilizing responsible citizens in every barangay.

Your paper carried the news on my proposal in your Dec. 1 issue. That same day, Commission on Human Rights Chair Aurora Navarette-Reciña was interviewed by a radio station regarding the arming of civilians. Her position was the headline of another broadsheet the next day. Reciña categorically said that her office finds no objection to citizens arming themselves, so long as they have proper permits. She also added "it is in their interest or the preservation of their own rights. It's self-defense we're talking about." I have the same opinion as Reciña.

Second, I would like to correct your opinion that I copied or was inspired by the President of the Philippines when she argued during the height of kidnapping on the issue of arming barangays, particular in Chinatown. I would like to inform you that as early as Dec. 1, 1995, I already filed a resolution to allow, legalize and authorize barangay chairpersons to bear side arms for protection and maintenance of peace and order in the community. That was six years ago and the President was then a senator.

I am a student of Philippine political developments. And I know for a fact that rebels who engage in *agaw-armas* operation is an insurgency problem and not a simple barangay peace and order problem. And insurgency is a problem the central government must address properly and seriously.

On the Rolito Go case, it is one of a kind among thousands of licensed gun owners. It is an exception, rather than the rule, so to speak.

While I may agree, to a certain degree, with your view on the possible revamp or abolition of the Philippine National Police if it cannot assure peace and order, this is not the solution to the problem. We might as well push for a constitutional amendment if there is indeed need for the abolition of the PNP.

Lastly, non-payment of taxes as a citizen's alternative to an inept government could be construed as seditious. This could only worsen the situation.

I hope I have contributed to a healthy debate on the issue.—**JULIO E. LOGARTA, councilor, Sixth District, Manila**

Censors chief assures action on complaints

I WOULD like to thank Tomas Tuason for his letter published last Nov. 26, titled "Was MTRCB asleep on this one?" calling the attention of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board to the movie that was shown on the Solar Cable channel, titled "Bound."

The legal department of the MTRCB has already taken action on this matter. Solar Cable was already advised to submit to the board for examination the movie complained of so we can determine if it violated the MTRCB's rules and regulations. If there is a violation, appropriate penalty will be imposed.

In this connection, I encourage the public to write directly to the Office of the Chairman, MTRCB regarding complaints about movies and programs on television and cable TV that they perceive to be too violent and/or sexually provocative and, therefore, not suitable for television. I give my assurance that these complaints will be acted upon swiftly and sanctions imposed on erring producers, television and cable TV networks.—**ALEJANDRO R. ROCES, chair, Movie and Television Review and Classification Board, Unit 3201, 33rd Flood, Atlanta Centre, 31 Annapolis St., Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila**

A vote for good governance

OUR country today is faced with tremendous socio-political and economic-financial challenges. Economic activity has slowed down drastically due to the current global downturn. The financial scenario is just as grim.

Good governance and sound financial management are the key to reversing this depressing economic situation.

We strongly endorse the confirmation of Jose Isidro Camacho as finance secretary. Here are his qualifications and accomplishments:

1. An undergraduate degree in Mathematics with cum laude honors from the De La Salle University.
2. A master's degree in Business Administration from the Harvard Business School in Boston, Massachusetts.
3. Over 21 years experience with two global financial institutions—Deutsche Bank A.G. and Bankers' Trust advancing from middle management level to managing director and country manager.
4. The passage of the Power Reform Bill during his tenure as energy secretary.
5. The enactment of the Anti-Money Laundering Act soon after his appointment as finance secretary by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Let's place our country's best and brightest leaders in the government. It is our hope that the Commission on Appointments will confirm the appointment of Camacho as finance secretary.—**ANTONIO M. DE YNCHAUSTI, ALEJANDRO R. ROCES, MITA PARDO DE TAVERA, chair, Bishops-Businessmen Conference Livelihood Foundation Inc., 12/F 1st e-Bank Bldg., 8737 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City**

LETTERS

ABB military actions not terrorism

MAY we issue a simple clarification with regard to the article, "NPA, ABB in the list of terrorist groups," that appeared in the Second Front Page section.

In one of the paragraphs, the article defined the Alex Boncayao Brigade as "an offshoot of the NPA...that terrorized the citizenry." The ABB, which has been renamed the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB) since 1997, has never "terrorized the citizenry" nor has it launched any action remotely close to terrorizing the citizenry. If ever, the RPA-ABB has only launched politico-military actions that sow terror among despotic landlords and capitalists, incorrigible criminals and enemies of the people.

These politico-military actions may be punitive actions or highly political-military strikes that serve and defend the interest of the working class and people, or if you like, the citizenry.—**REVOLUTIONARY PROLETARIAN ARMY-ALEX BONCAYAO BRIGADE (RPA-ABB)**

Corruption persists in Quezon City

I AM writing this in my desire to prevent the administration of Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. from being caught in the trap of inefficiency, red tape and corruption that overtook his predecessor.

It has been five months since Belmonte assumed office as mayor of Quezon City and we expected him to eradicate or even minimize the red tape and the incidence of graft and corruption in the different offices of city hall.

Obviously to date, he has failed miserably in fulfilling his election promise of bringing sanity to city governance. Red tape and corruption persist in many of the offices of the city government.

The President herself has, time and again, exhorted local officials to cut red tape and eradicate corruption. Some heed her call but not so many officials in Quezon City.

Belmonte at this early stage of his incumbency, should be made aware of this rot. Otherwise *paano naman kami sa* Quezon City?—**NICANOR T. GAUTANE, 220 P. Tuason St., Cubao, Quezon City**

When a pound of feathers is heavier than gold

THE REASON given by Bong Barrameda in his column "Trivia" (PDI, 29/11/01) as to why a pound of feathers is heavier than a pound of gold is not quite right.

The avoirdupois pound (avdp lb) is heavier than the troy pound (t lb) by definition and not because there are four more ounces in the former. The troy ounce (t oz) is not the same as the avoirdupois ounce (avdp oz).

We can see this more clearly by converting to the metric system.

1 oz, avdp = 28.35 grams (g)
16 oz, avdp = 1 lb, avdp
1 lb, avdp = 453.6 g (28.35 x 16)
1 oz, t = 31.1 g
12 oz, t = 1 lb, t
1 lb, t = 373.2 g (31.1 x 12)

If the ounce is used instead of pound, an ounce of feathers is lighter than an ounce of gold.—**ROMEO T. SAN JOSE, 1325 Ocampo St., Cardona, Rizal**

Holiday cheer at Diliman

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I WAS feeling like Mr. Scrooge last Sunday afternoon, having to drive to UP Diliman for some academic chore. "Bah humbug!" I almost muttered when I got to the campus and found its main streets closed to vehicular traffic, which meant I had to park some distance from my office.

In the end though, taking that walk to my office turned out to be a welcome break, reminding me that the Diliman campus is like a huge oil painting: to appreciate it, you need to step back and take different perspectives. Diliman's grandeur comes not just from the awesome, like its towering acacia trees, but also from its little surprises, like the occasional sunflowers peeping from behind the *talahib* groves.

Last summer I thought of writing about the Diliman campus but kept postponing it, almost fearful that we'd have hordes of people descending on the campus and spoiling it. But then I realized I was assuming too much about my readership's numbers, and too little about my readers' civic sense. So, let me ride now on holiday cheer—Christmas, Idul Fitr, Hanukkah—to invite you to visit the campus.

I'd suggest you visit on a Sunday, and I'm saying this hoping the university decides to keep the main avenues car-free on that day. Without the vehicles, you catch more of the breeze, and nature's many little sounds.

There are just so many little nooks and crannies, streets and alleys, each with its own ambience. Last Sunday's walk took me past the main library, where you still have large bamboo thickets. I could hear birds all around, reminding me of walks through botanical gardens in other countries. On my way back, around dusk, there was a different concert going on, this time of crickets.

Past the Sunken Gardens, I found people jogging and strolling, as well as dogs exercising their humans. I regretted not bringing my dogs but let me say too that the last thing we need is to have too many of them romping around. (If you do bring your dogs, make sure you can keep them behaved, and that you bring your own plastic "scoop bags.")

The campus, including our infamous lagoon, site of many trysts, is perfect for picnics but again, please make sure you follow the rules of eco-tourism: "Leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but photographs, kill nothing but time."

There's also a wider choice of eating places now, from the usual fishball and *taho* sidewalk vendors to "fine dining" restaurants. At the Bahay ng Alumni there's Chocolate Kisses and close to the Philippine National Bank there's Chateau Verde. In the Krus na Ligas area, there's Likha-Diwa, a feminist New Age sort of place which offers a wide range of affordable alternative dishes, vegetarian and carnivorous, as well as New Age stuff like scented candles. (If you get a migraine from heavy scents, like I do, avoid sitting near the display area.)

Yup, you can do some of your holiday shopping here. Odd Manila at the Bahay ng Alumni offers, well, odds and ends, from antique cabinets to eight-track tapes and vinyl records and Tibetan Buddhist prayer flags. As if that's not enough, it's also an art gallery, a snack counter with the best humus in the country, and a venue for lectures and workshops. No training workshops scheduled this month but in January, they plan to resume tai chi and belly-dancing lessons (two separate teachers, mind you).

Remember the controversy about putting up malls in UP Diliman? I think they should just encourage what's going on right now with small and medium businesses. The existing UP Shopping Center ("Dilimall," my students call it) is very Third World, including stinky toilets, but it offers an amazing variety of affordable products and services. There are Internet cafés, fruit stands, newsstands, photocopying, *carinderias*. Much of the stuff you won't find in our fancy malls, and they can be real bargains. The other day I found a place selling prepaid Internet cards offering 10 hours for P100! (They'd run out of the cards so I couldn't test it.)

Two good shops at the UP Shopping Center that I can recommend are Galeria Pilipinas for handicrafts from all over and Maroons with its UP T-shirts, including one with a parody on Kilmer's famous poem: "I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a 3." (A "3" is a passing grade in UP.)

For the culture vulture, the Diliman campus always has something cooking. Call the UP Film Center (925-0286) before visiting so you can find out what they're showing and its screening times. They have all kinds of local and international films there, and sometimes even have sneak previews of Filipino films.

UP's many theaters and music groups are also always presenting something. Check with the OICA (the Office for Initiatives in Culture and Arts) on a weekday for what's going on. Its number is 928-1928. Oh, and if you're lucky, you might catch one of the groups rehearsing. Last Sunday my academic chore became so much lighter as voices floated in from the distance. I think it was UP's Singing Ambassadors rehearsing at the Vargas Museum.

Yes, we also have museums but let me save that for another article next year. We've got it all: churches (but, sadly, no mosque yet), an observatory (even if it's Pagasa's), even several hostels in case you want to stay overnight. Give me a bit more time to uncover our other hidden treasures. Meanwhile, to cap this year's activities, let me invite you to our annual Lantern Parade scheduled in the evening of Dec. 19. Oh yes, the other UP campuses will also have similar parades and I hear that some of them, UP Manila's especially, have become as good as (or better than?) Diliman's.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

Who is raising funds for 2004?

I TAKE exception to Neal H. Cruz's reference to me (PDI, 12/4, 5/01) as a member of the "Bond of Brothers" or the Cabinet "Gang of Four." I have absolutely no knowledge of the existence of such a group and I am certainly not a member of any such group. As finance secretary, it is my job to keep a tight watch over our fiscal position and to make sure our fiscal policies support the economic development program of government. I can assure you that I have never received instructions or pressure from anyone to raise funds for the 2004 elections nor will I agree to such instructions.

I would like to clarify specific issues that Cruz raised in his columns regarding the borrowing program.

First, Cruz wrote that "instead of collecting taxes, Camacho issues bonds left and right to cover the deficit and to finance his sister's NGO. "

Given our delicate fiscal position and the slowdown in the world economy, we are compelled to do some significant borrowings to finance our programs. But several of our announced financings are already meant to cover next year's requirements. The reason for this aggressive borrowing stance is to take advantage of terms that are currently relatively attractive and to eliminate the concern that we will have a problem financing our deficit next year especially given the volatility in the emerging markets.

Nevertheless, there is a parallel and intensive effort to improve revenue generation. Several administrative measures to boost collection efficiency have been implemented at the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs and we have already seen these bear fruit. A number of legislative measures are also being pushed to improve our tax structure. Meanwhile, we are fast-tracking the privatization of certain government assets to bring in more revenues.

As for my sister's involvement in the "PEACE" bonds, we reiterate that the bond issue was auctioned with complete transparency and following tried and tested procedures of the National Treasury. Only GSEDs were allowed to participate in the auction of those bonds. There were over P137 billion bids received from about 20 institutions. RCBC's (the winning bidder) decision to trade the bond in the secondary market is allowed by law and is beyond the government's control. I also inhibited myself from this transaction when I took office as finance secretary and this transaction was already in an advanced stage by then.

I think it is also worthwhile to mention that this bond issue yielded a significantly lower financing cost (12.75 percent p.a.) to the national government compared to the then prevailing 10-year Treasury yields in the secondary market of almost 17 percent p.a. This is so even if one were to consider the effect of the 20-percent withholding tax on interest that is not applicable to this bond issue because of its structure.

Cruz also wrote: "Paying back the bonds issued will no longer be his (Secretary Camacho) problem. It will be the problem of the next administration."

On the contrary, the borrowing policies that this administration has adopted are all geared toward the objective of wiping out the deficit by 2006. If we stick to our fiscal track, the following administration may be able to enjoy a budgetary surplus two years after it takes office.

We would therefore like to assure Cruz and the public that this government does not believe in trading our long-term objectives for short-sighted gains.—**JOSE ISIDRO N. CAMACHO, secretary, Department of Finance, Roxas Boulevard corner Pablo Ocampo Street, Manila**

The WORLD

LUVERNE B. GUECO, EDITOR

Al-Qaida terror group operating in Indonesia

JAKARTA—Foreign terrorists, including Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network, are cooperating with domestic radicals on Indonesia's Sulawesi island which has been wracked by fighting between Christians and Muslims, the country's intelligence chief said Wednesday.

Lt. Gen. Abdullah Hendropriyono told reporters after meeting with President Megawati Sukarnoputri that the foreigners were working with local militant groups, responsible for much of the fighting.

"It is the result of cooperation between international terrorists and domestic radical groups," he told journalists.

Asked whether he was referring to al-Qaida, he said: "Yes, that is who I mean."

This is the first time the government has alleged that al-Qaida is linked to the sectarian bloodshed in the world's most populous Muslim nation.

Indonesia is not on a US list of nations where al-Qaida is known to be present and local Muslim militants have repeatedly denied any links to the Taliban or al-Qaida.

Senior intelligence officials have in the past accused human rights organizations of working closely with foreign radical Muslim groups.

About 1,000 people have been killed on Sulawesi island in the past two years in fighting between Christians and Muslims. In the nearby province of Maluku, about 9,000 people have died in three years of sectarian warfare.

The government has dispatched about 2,000 police and soldiers to Sulawesi and says the situation is now under control.

Deputy police chief Gen. Sjahcroedin Pagaralam, was quoted by The Jakarta Post newspaper as saying security forces would raid the camps of armed militias and confiscate weapons. He said if any outsiders are found in the area they would be deported.

A Muslim militia group, Laskar Jihad, has been blamed for much of the recent fighting in the region. It arrived on Sulawesi a few months ago after taking part in sectarian battles in the Maluku islands.

In Ambon, the capital of Maluku province about 2,500 km northeast of Jakarta, most residents stayed home Wednesday expecting another day of violence by Christians angered over Tuesday's blast on a boat ferrying Christians through a Muslim-controlled area.

Christian groups accused Muslim militants of being responsible for explosion, which also left dozens injured. Navy officers said it was not clear what triggered the blast, but speculated that an electrical short-circuit may have ignited the fuel tank. *AP*

Anti-Taliban forces capture Australian

SYDNEY—A 26-year-old Australian trained in terrorism by Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network has been captured fighting with the Taliban in Afghanistan, Australian officials said Wednesday.

The 26-year-old, named by news reports Wednesday night as David Hicks from Adelaide, was captured by Northern Alliance troops in Afghanistan on or around Dec. 9, the federal government said Wednesday.

Attorney General Daryl Williams said Canberra had been advised that the man was in good health, but would not disclose where he was being detained. His identity was also being withheld to protect his family.

But Channel Seven TV said three years ago, a David Hicks had approached the network wanting to sell a story about fighting as a mercenary in South Africa or Afghanistan.

And an Adelaide man who claimed to know Hicks indicated the Australian was serving as a mercenary rather than someone committed to a cause.

"I think he was just more in it for the money and the excitement," the man, identified only as Nick, told Channel Ten TV. *AP*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, December 13, 2001
2nd Week of Advent

1st Reading: Is 41:13-20
Gospel: Mt 11:11-15

Jesus said to the crowds. "I tell you this: no one greater than John the Baptist has come forward among the sons of women, and yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven is something to be conquered and the unyielding seize it.

Up to the time of John, there was only prophesy: all the prophets and the Law; and if you believe me, John is this Elijah, whose coming was predicted. Let anyone with ears listen!"

Commentary

Interesting Gospel. It takes us away from the usual perspective and language with which we read the evangelical texts nowadays. Jesus says that "the kingdom of heaven is something to be conquered and the most decisive seize it." And so the other side of reality is revealed to us. We must be strong to be able to love. Oppression, abuse, slavery, hatred and murder are all signs of weakness. Only the weak and the coward do these things. Jesus invites us and wants us to be strong and powerful, so that we even may love those who want to do us harm. These are the new times of the kingdom. The radical novelty that Jesus is offering us.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

POLITICAL LAW (CONSTITUTIONAL LAW—BILL OF RIGHTS)/REMEDIAL LAW (CRIMINAL PROCEDURE)—Validity of search warrant—Section 2, Article III of the Constitution lays down the general rule that a search and seizure must be carried our through or on the strength of a judicial warrant, absent which such search and seizure becomes unreasonable within the meaning of said constitutional provision. Supporting jurisprudence thus outlined the following requisites for a search warrant's validity: (1) it must be issued upon probable cause; (2) the probable cause must be determined by the judge himself and not by the applicant or any other person; (3) in the determination of probable cause, the judge must examine, under oath or affirmation, the complainant and such witnesses as the latter may produce; and (4) the warrant issued must particularly describe the place to be searched and persons or things to be seized. Seizure is limited to those items particularly described in a valid search warrant. Searching officers are without discretion regarding what articles they shall seize. Evidence seized on the occasion of such an unreasonable search and seizure is tainted and excluded for being the proverbial "fruit of a poisonous tree." In the language of the fundamental law, it shall be inadmissible in evidence for any purpose in any proceeding. In this case, the firearm was found as a result of a meticulous search in the kitchen of petitioner's house. This firearm, to emphasize, was not mentioned in the search warrant. Hence, the seizure was illegal. The seizure without the requisite search warrant was in plaint violation of the law and the Constitution. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Pardo, First Division, Del Rosario v. People, G.R. No. 142294, May 31, 2001]

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4 more Palestinians killed in Israel helicopter strikes

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip—Despite a US peace envoy's call for 48 hours of calm, Israeli helicopter gunships attacked a Palestinian refugee camp early Wednesday in retaliation for mortar fire on nearby Jewish settlements. Four Palestinian militiamen were killed and 20 bystanders wounded in the Israeli air strike.

The violence raised questions about the effectiveness of the US mediation mission. Only a day earlier, the US envoy Anthony Zinni, had asked Israelis and Palestinians to observe two days of calm to help lower tensions and rebuild trust, said a US official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

In truce talks Tuesday, Zinni requested that Israel refrain from targeted killings of suspected militants and from shelling Palestinian Authority targets, said a Palestinian security official.

The Palestinians were asked to stop mortar fire and round up more suspected Islamic militants, the security official said.

Yarden Vatikay, an adviser to Israel's defense minister, denied that Zinni made specific demands of Israel. "His request of Israel was to act in a responsible fashion, but there was no demand to stop actions which are meant for self defense," Vatikay said.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said in a statement that Israel was acting responsibly. He said Israeli troops would continue to respond to Palestinian mortar fire and to strike against militants suspected of planning attacks on Israelis.

ARAFAT

Last week, three Palestinian suicide bombers killed 26 people in Israel, the latest in a series of attacks by the Hamas and Islamic Jihad groups.

Tuesday's truce talks were stormy, as were two previous rounds in recent days, and Mohammed Dahlan, the Palestinian security chief in the Gaza Strip, left abruptly after a loud argument with the head of Israel's Shin Bet security service, Avi Dichter, said Palestinian officials close to the talks.

Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo, meanwhile, described the Palestinians' crackdown on suspected militants as a "very serious battle we have never experienced before."

Israel has dismissed the arrests as insufficient, saying many of those taken into custody were minor activists, not planners of terror attacks.

The Palestinians say more than 180 suspects have been detained, including 17 on a list of 33 names of wanted militants submitted by the United States.

The latest exchange began when Palestinians fired four mortar shells at Jewish settlements in the southern Gaza Strip late Tuesday. The mortar shells caused no damage or injuries.

In retaliation, Israeli helicopters fired missiles at the Khan Younis refugee camp in Gaza late Tuesday and early Wednesday, killing four Palestinians and wounding 20, including four who were in serious condition Palestinian doctors said.

The first air strike targeted a hiding place of members of a local militia, the so-called Abu Rish group, which has tentative links to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement, camp residents said. Two of the militiamen were killed immediately and two more in another Israeli strike an hour later, witnesses said.

Israel's military said those targeted in the air strike had been involved in firing mortars at Israeli settlements. It said members of the Islamic militant group Hamas were also involved in the shelling. The Palestinian police chief in the Gaza Strip, Brig. Gen. Abdel Razek Majaida, accused Israel of attacking civilian areas.

Palestinians responded to the air strikes by firing six mortar shells at Israeli settlements that damaged four homes and a car, the Israeli Army said. Israel, in turn, fired tank shells at a building in Khan Yunis from which soldiers believed the mortar shells had been fired, the Army said.

The continuing violence further complicated international efforts to stop 15 months of Palestinian-Israeli violence. During that time, 815 people have been killed on the Palestinian side and 232 on the Israeli side.

Zinni's mission is to implement a truce plan worked out last May by CIA Director George Tenet, calling for cessation of violence, a crackdown on Palestinian militant groups and stopping Israeli restrictions and military strikes. If that is achieved, Zinni would proceed to a plan for restarting peace talks. *AP*

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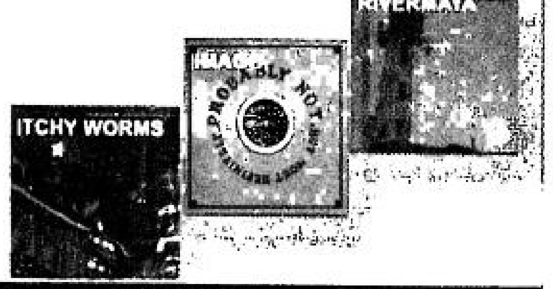

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HINT: Check out *Business Friday section* on Friday, December 14, for Inquirer's My Wish box.

Tamil attacks leave 16 dead

COLOMBO—Tamil Tiger rebels staged major attacks against army troops and police in Sri Lanka Wednesday, killing at least 16 people on the eve of a new Cabinet of ministers being sworn in, defense officials said.

The rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam fighters fired 120 mm mortar bombs at the Pahala Toppur army base in the northeastern district of Trincomalee in a bid to overrun the camp, officials said.

Defense ministry spokesperson Sanath Karunaratne said security forces beat back the predawn rebel assault by killing at least six guerrillas. Three soldiers were also killed and 20 of them wounded.

"Troop reinforcements were able to repulse the attack and take back a bunker line that the terrorists occupied briefly," Karunaratne said, adding that security forces captured four automatic rifles used by the attackers.

In a simultaneous attack, the Tigers struck the Valachchenai police station in the adjoining Batticaloa district. Six constables and a civilian employee of the nearby telecommunications exchange were killed. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Interest in chemistry, aviation

TORNAK FARMS, Afghanistan—A chemistry text, an issue of Aviation Week magazine and a copy of Chemical Weekly were found strewn about an abandoned training camp of Osama bin Laden's terrorist network. The publications were picked up Tuesday in the ruins of this camp 20 km south of Kandahar as a group of journalists joined American and British special forces troops inspecting the desert camp, abandoned after heavy US air strikes. The camp was clearly an important part of Bin Laden's worldwide terror network. One of the Americans, who would not give his name, said an al-Qaida training video was filmed at the camp, which even had a swimming pool. Camp buildings were destroyed except for an area where an obstacle course had been constructed. Poles with the barbed wire on top—used for recruits to crawl under—were intact. A damaged tractor sat in the compound. *AP*

SEALS storm Singapore ship

SINGAPORE—US Navy SEALS stormed a Singapore-chartered container ship off the coast of Pakistan, handcuffing six crew members and injuring two, a spokesperson for the shipping line said yesterday. The SEALS—an elite Navy special forces group—along with US Marines who boarded later, were apparently scouring the ship for terrorists and illegal weapons but failed to turn up anything, the spokesperson said. Early last Thursday, the US forces approached in small craft and boarded the Panama-registered ship Kota Sejarah, chartered by Singapore-based Pacific International Lines or PIL, a PIL spokesperson said. Six crew members were handcuffed with plastic bands and forced to lie face-down on the deck for about 30 minutes. *AP*

Connection denied

KUALA LUMPUR—An executive of a Malaysian company named in connection with the first criminal indictment stemming from the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States yesterday said he had never heard of the suspect and had not paid him money. Ahmad Zaki, the general manager of Infocus Tech, said the first he had heard of Zacarias Moussaoui was when US news media contacted him about the French Moroccan who was charged in the United States with conspiracy to murder thousands of people, the victims of the attacks. "We had never heard of Zacarias Moussaoui before today," Ahmad said. "We are shocked to get any mention in US legal affairs. We think that our company name has been used in this matter," he said. In a 30-page indictment issued Tuesday, a US federal grand jury charged Moussaoui, a 33-year-old Frenchman of Moroccan descent, with six felonies—four of which carry the death penalty in the United States. The indictment detailed an alleged international plot dating back to 1998 that involved Osama bin Laden, the 19 hijackers who crashed jetliners into New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and top lieutenants of Bin Laden's Al-Qaida organization. *AP*

Red carpet for Jiang

RANGOON—Chinese President Jiang Zemin was feted on his first visit to Burma yesterday with a lavish welcome from the military junta, which relies heavily on Chinese investment and arms. Jiang, the first Chinese president to visit Burma since 1985, was met at the airport by the regime's ruling troika of generals after touching down around 12:30 p.m. Thousands of well-wishers cheered as troops fired a 21-gun salute for the president as he began a three-day visit to a state isolated by the international community over its human rights record. Jiang was welcomed by Senior General Than Shwe, chair of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), Vice Chair Gen. Maung Aye and head of military intelligence Lieut. Gen. Khin Nyunt. Chinese officials have said that Jiang's visit is aimed at "enhancing understanding, friendship and cooperation" and will include the signing of bilateral agreements. *AFP*

Ex-ministers face graft raps

DHAKA—Corruption charges have been filed against Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed and six of her senior former Cabinet colleagues in a move the opposition called politically motivated. Separate cases were filed late Tuesday in Dhaka police stations by the government's anti-corruption bureau after the charges received required approval by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, police said. Sheikh Hasina's Awami League quickly issued a statement denouncing the charges, calling it a "manifestation of a political vendetta . . . to subdue political opponents." Sheikh Hasina, who is on a private trip to Britain and the United States, is accused in two cases in which she is allegedly responsible for $122 million in financial irregularities. If convicted, she could face jail, a fine or both. In one case, Sheikh Hasina is accused of taking personal profit at the exchequer's expense in the purchase of eight Russian-made state-of-the-art MiG-29 jets. *AFP*

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MPs want head of defense minister

NEW DELHI—The Indian parliament was forced to adjourn for the second straight day yesterday as opposition MPs called for the head of Defense Minister George Fernandes, who is mired in another scandal related to defense purchases.

As soon as the Speaker entered the lower house, the opposition benches were on their feet, shouting slogans and demanding the minister's resignation.

As the MPs ringed the well of the chamber, the Speaker adjourned the house until noon.

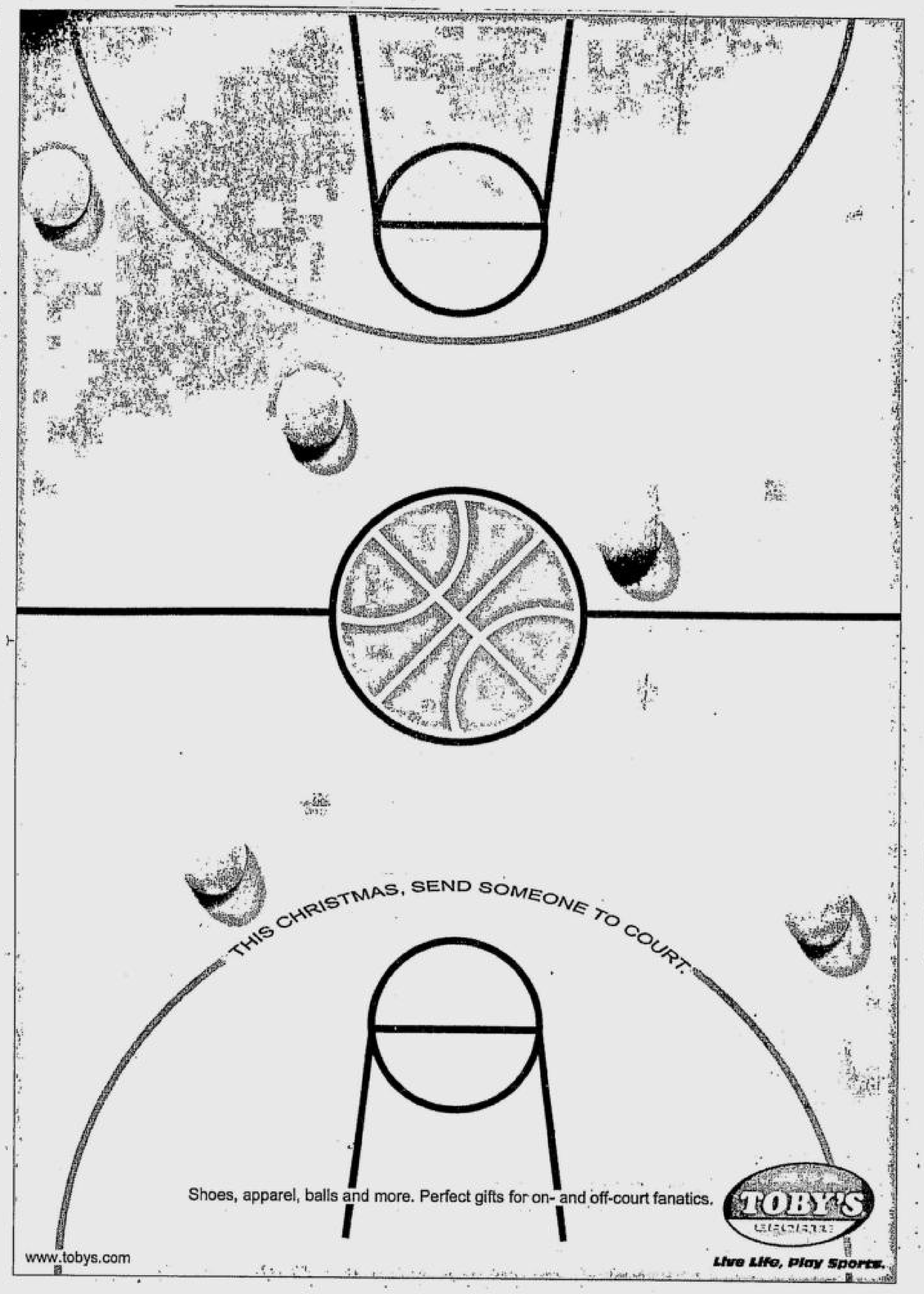
But when the parliament reconvened, opposition members resumed their protests and the Speaker adjourned the house for another two and half hours.

The latest in the string of scandals dogging Fernandes concerns a report by India's Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)—a parliamentary watchdog on government spending.

The report has brought out serious irregularities in the purchase of coffins from a US-based firm during the height of the 1999 Kargil conflict between Indian troops and Pakistan-backed forces in Kashmir.

According to the CAG report, the government had approved the purchase of 500 aluminum coffins at hugely inflated prices to carry the remains of what are now referred to as the Kashmir "martyrs."

Basudeb Acharya, an MP from the Communist Party of India, said the opposition would not allow parliament to function until the government "clarified" its position. *AFP*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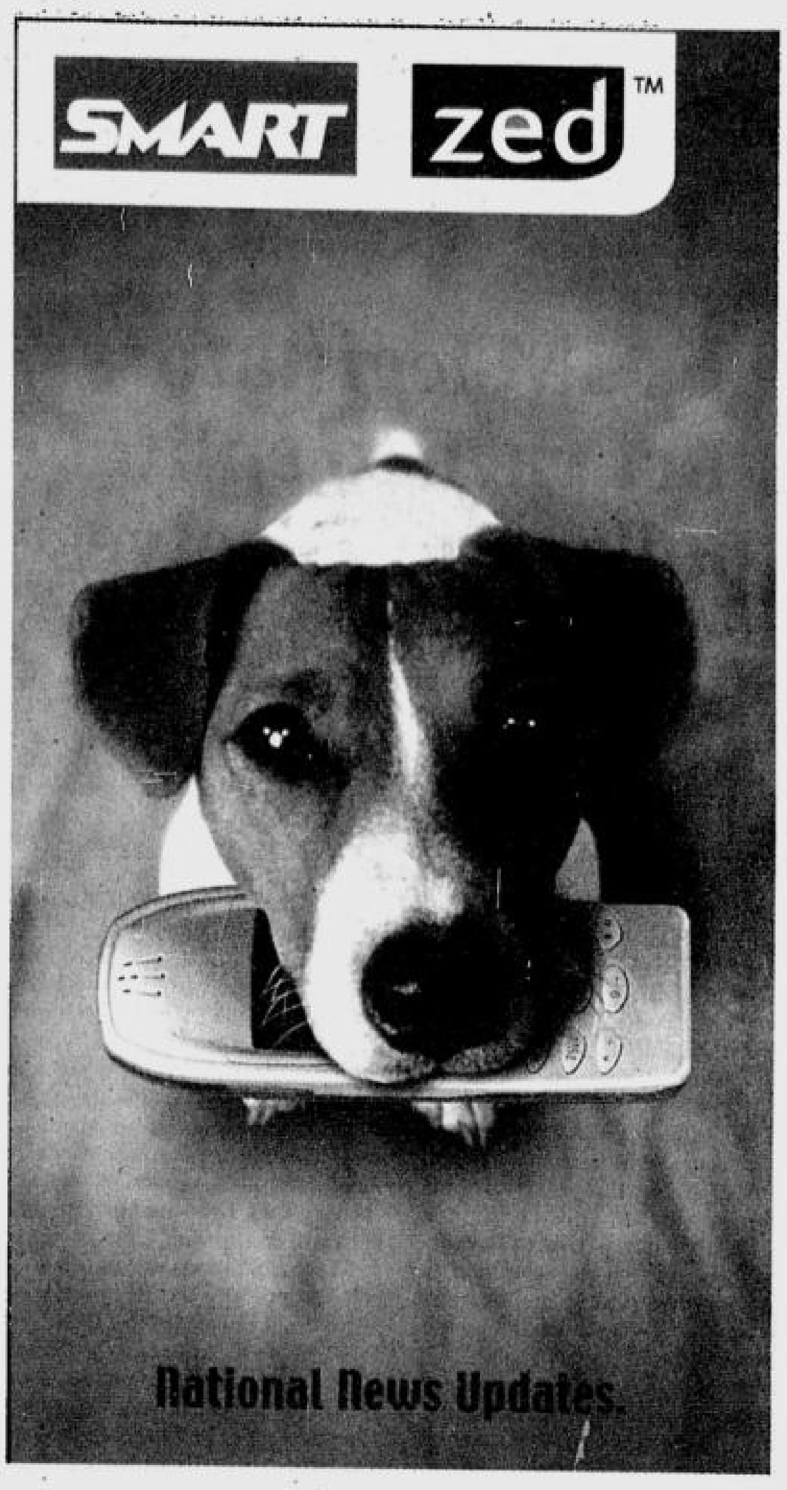

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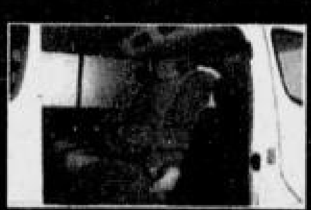
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Across the NATION

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ARMM legislators start race to split spoils among selves

COTABATO CITY—Two regional lawmakers representing two major tribal groups in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) are seeking the region's third highest post.

Assemblyman Umbra Datumanong, representing Maguindanao's second district, and Assemblyman Ismael Abubakar of Tawi-Tawi's lone district are contesting the speakership of the ARMM's Regional Legislative Assembly (RLA).

Datumanong is the younger brother of Public Works Secretary Simeon Datumanong while Abubakar served as the first speaker of the RLA.

While the 4th RLA has yet to hold its inaugural session, lawmakers have started "picking flowers" for the various committees.

Datumanong is said to have the numbers that will elevate him to the most coveted post among lawmakers in the ARMM, according to a neophyte assemblyman.

Asking that he not be named, the lawmaker said under the leadership of Gov. Parouk Hussin, equal representation of various tribal groups in the autonomous region is always a priority in filling up appointive positions.

"Hussin is a Tausug, Vice Gov. (Mahid) Mutilan is a Maranaw, therefore the speaker should be a Maguindanaoan," he said. "Assemblyman Datumanong is the man for the post."

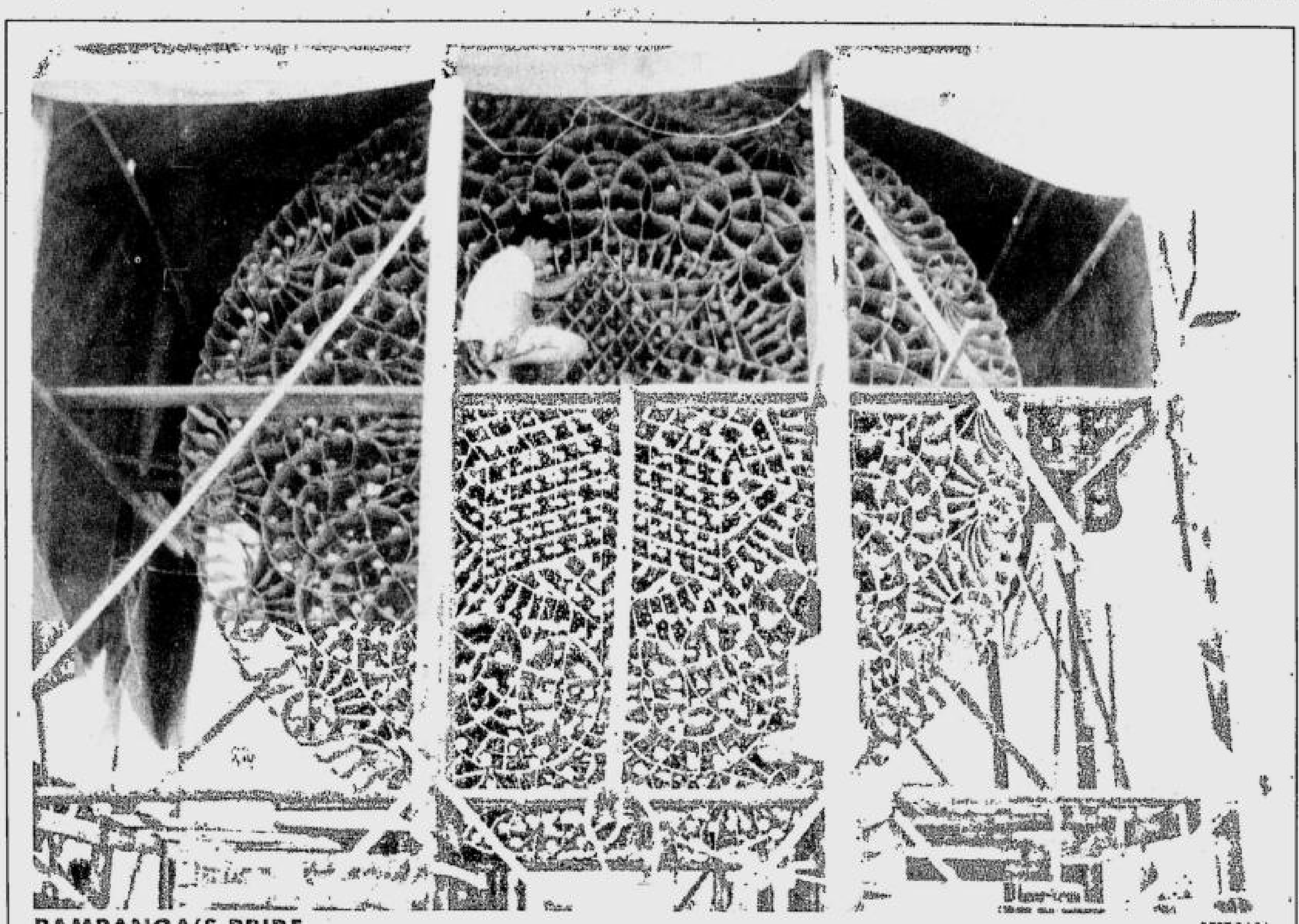
Lawyer Tommy Ala, a Maguindanaoan assemblyman representing Maguindanao's first district, said "if the elections for speaker were held today, Datumanong is a sure winner because Maguindanao and Maranaw (legislators) are behind him."

Abubakar has to get the support of assemblymen from Tawi-Tawi, Sulu and Basilan. Tawi-Tawi's lone district has three assemblymen, Sulu's two districts have six and Basilan's lone district has three.

If Datumanong has the Maranaw and Maguindanaoan vote while Abubakar has the support of lawmakers from Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Basilan, each will end up with 12 votes.

Party affiliations will play a vital role in choosing the RLA speaker, according to an ally of Datumanong.

Most of the elected assemblymen belong to the administration's Lakas-NUCD-Ompia-MNLF party coalition. Maranaw and Maguindanaoan assemblymen have been holding caucuses since Monday, discussing who will chair which committees. *Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



PAMPANGA'S PRIDE BERT BASA

Workers put finishing touches to a Christmas lantern measuring 14.5 feet in diameter and is one of the entries to Pampanga's Giant Lantern Festival. This particular lantern has 2,000 bulbs.

'Erap River' scares 1,000 families

MINALIN, Pampanga—At least 1,000 families along the San Francisco River here are facing dislocation from the construction of the Erap River, a 37-kilometer flood control channel funded by the Japanese government through P3.5-billion loan.

Residents of Barangays Sta. Catalina, San Francisco I, Bulac and Maniango expressed fears of displacement after they received last week right-of-way notices from the Mount Pinatubo Emergency-Project Management Office (MPE-PMO) of the Department of Public Works and Highway.

The notices, signed by MPE-PMO Director Amando Ramirez, indicated the extent of the area that will be covered by the dredging and widening of the San Francisco River, one of 10 tributaries that will be aligned to form the Erap River.

The 10 tributaries span the City of San Fernando and the towns of Mexico, Sto. Tomas, Minalin and Macabebe, a DPWH report showed.

The Erap River will be the third river in the province after the Pampanga and Pasig-Potrero rivers.

Ramirez, through the notices, also urged the residents to submit land documents. Copies of a resolution on land valuation by the provincial appraisal committee were also distributed to the residents.

Honorio Sarmiento, a Sta. Catalina resident, urged MPE-PMO officials to adjust the alignment of the dredging and widening work.

Lands on the opposite bank should be claimed instead because these are not populated, Sarmiento said.

Renato Waji, San Francisco I council member, made the same proposal. In his village, he said his neighbors have no other place to go.

Most of the families, displaced by Mt. Pinatubo's eruptions in 1991 and lahar flows in the next years, remained in the village because they were unable to get housing units in resettlement sites.

"Where will we go? We have no other land except the little here that we borrowed from our relatives," said Amalia Mendoza, a resident in Sta. Catalina.

The project, which is worth P900.2 million, does not provide funds for resettlement, DPWH documents showed.

Mayor Edgar Flores aired strong opposition to the plan to move the communities out of the project's way since this would set back efforts of the residents to recover from the Mt. Pinatubo disaster.

"The Solomonic solution here is to adjust the alignment of the project, to only allow dredging and widening in areas that are not populated," Flores told the INQUIRER on Wednesday.

Flores and the residents clarified they were not against the project which was in the pipeline since 1998 to hasten the flow of floodwater toward the Manila Bay. The project received funding during the Estrada administration.

Ramirez said he would urge the China International Water and Electric Corp., the project contractor, to modify the alignment so the communities could be spared from dislocation.

Aida Ishikawa, executive director of the Central Luzon Center for Emergency Aid and Rehabilitation, asked the MPE-PMO and DPWH officials to consider the appeal of the residents.

She said the dislocation of the residents would bring to 2,000 the number of displaced families who were rendered homeless by the flood control component of the Pampanga Delta Development Project. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Man who killed wife, 2 daughters charged

VILLAVERDE, Nueva Vizcaya—Police on Monday filed multiple parricide charges against a man for allegedly killing his wife and two daughters, and seriously injuring another of his children on Dec. 1 in an upland village here.

Three counts of parricide charges and a frustrated parricide charge were filed before the municipal trial court here against Dionisio Calonge, 37, for the death of his wife Rosita, 35, and children Dony Rose, 9, and Kimberly, 7, and for seriously injuring Melody, 11.

Police based the charges on the testimony given by Melody Calonge, 11, the eldest child and lone survivor in the killings.

Melody pointed to her father as their attacker.

The police also included the testimony of witnesses who quoted the suspect as allegedly saying he wanted to kill his family.

Dionisio denied the charges, claiming that it was his wife's relatives who attacked his family.

But according to Melody, the night before the massacre, she saw her father sharpening a bolo inside their house in Sitio Lumoy in Barangay Cabuluan here.

At dawn on Dec. 1, she awoke to see her father walking around the house with a flashlight, and without any provocation, hacked the four of them with his bolo.

Wounded and shocked, Melody said she saw her father supposedly scoop blood from the victims and smudge it all over his body.

Later, relatives found the bodies of the victims, while Dionisio suffered a cut in his chin and a stab wound in his abdomen. Police said the wounds could be self-inflicted.

Melody and the victims' relatives described the suspect as an "extremely violent man," who allegedly inflicted severe punishment on his family for their petty mistakes. *Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Kin of fishermen slain by troops to file raps

PAGADIAN CITY—The families of three fishermen who were reportedly snatched and killed by local militiamen in Vincenso-Sagun, Zamboanga del Sur on Dec. 8 said they would file multiple murder, abduction, and frustrated homicide cases against the suspects.

But Col. Jet Velarmino, chief of the 51st Infantry Battalion, said those allegedly involved were under the unit of the 30th IB.

The 30th IB elements are under Velarmino's command as replacement of government soldiers sent to Basilan.

"We will conduct an inquiry," Velarmino said, claiming that he did not receive any report linking militiamen to the killings.

The families of the victims said they will also seek the help of the Commission on Human Rights.

A survivor, Ahmed Madjid, said six militiamen and a still unidentified detachment commander were behind the killings.

Madjid, who suffered gunshot wounds, said he and fishermen Jul Taiting and Hassan Esmael were casting their nets around 4 p.m. on Dec. 8 when members of the Civilian Auxiliary Force Geographical Unit (Cafgu) onboard three outriggers seized them.

He added that the militiamen, led by Pepe Manjot, later fired at them.

Already wounded, the militiamen allegedly brought the fishermen to an outpost in Barangay Danan in Vincenso-Sagun town.

About 10 p.m., the detachment commander allegedly ordered the militiamen to bring the fishermen to the shore where they were beaten up.

Madjid said he managed to run to the water and escape.

Taiting and Esmael remained missing. But residents claimed that their bodies were dumped off the waters of Vincenso-Sagun. *Hernan de la Cruz, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Gloria gets boost from ex-CBCP head

DAGUPAN CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo has received the support of the former president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, amid the controversies and problems hounding Ms Macapagal and her family.

Archbishop Oscar Cruz of the Lingayen-Dagupan diocese, also former CBCP president, said Ms Macapagal could be "losing focus" in answering various issues thrown at her because of the problems besieging the country.

Cruz said Ms Macapagal's hands are filled with domestic problems and international concerns and these was why "she can't concentrate very well on each issue."

"The people seem to lack the initiative and creativeness and are so dependent on the President for action. Even the Cabinet members wait for instructions and orders before they act and decide," he said.

He appealed to warring politicians to stop throwing accusations at each other and instead help the President solve national problems.

"Our country is (facing) peace problems posed by different groups like the New People's Army, National Democratic Front, Moro National Liberation Front and Moro Islamic Liberation Front," said Cruz.

"Partisan politics adds to the confusion. We are hoping they (stop bickering) even only during Christmas. This is a good occasion for the government and the different groups to quiet down for sometime," he added.

Cruz did not mention the Abu Sayyaf group in his call for peace, saying the bandits are already "out of peace's reach" and are considered criminals.

He also called on the Catholic faithful to join the worldwide special prayer and fasting on Dec. 14 called by Pope John Paul II.

Cruz said the line "Give peace a chance" from a song of the Beatles is not a mere advice but an "ardent call for humanity to come to its senses."

"This call is not only relevant to the Philippines but to Israel, Palestine and Afghanistan (because) they are suffering from war," he said. *Yolanda Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread over Mindanao. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers particularly over the Eastern section.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy with Rains	Hi 31° Lo 23°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy to Cloudy	Hi 24° Lo 15°
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Hi 30° Lo 18°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Hi 34° Lo 21°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Hi 31° Lo 22°
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 28° Lo 20°
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 24°
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 28° Lo 21°
Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 24°
Roxas	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 24°
Cebu	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 24°
Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 27° Lo 24°
Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 28° Lo 22°
Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 24°
Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 23°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/12/13/01

ANTIPOLO 'ENCOUNTER'

Slain tribal leader not rebel, say friends

SAN PABLO CITY—The Dumagat cultural minority leader who was killed allegedly by soldiers was not a New People's Army rebel, but a farmer and human rights advocate, according to a female tribe member.

Conchita Conchada, 41, also a Dumagat leader of the group Bigkis at Lakas ng mga Katutubo sa Timog Katagalugan or Balatik, said she had been working for many years with slain leader Nicanor de los Santos, 49, to protest various projects that would destroy their ancestral land.

"Kano (Nicanor) was a legitimate cultural minority leader who had a principle. He is not an NPA contrary to reports coming from the military," said Conchada.

But police insisted that De los Santos was a ranking member of the "Narciso Antazo Aramil Command of the communist NPA."

They said the slain tribal leader was in the list of suspected NPA commanders and that he was killed in an encounter with the military in Antipolo City.

According to the Karapatan-ST, De los Santos was killed at 5:30 p.m., Dec. 8, in Antipolo City, allegedly by government soldiers.

Authorities, the human rights group said, are mum on the case.

"This is sad and disturbing. The Office of the President must not keep silent over the killing of leaders (like De los Santos) of organized groups, which had catapulted her to power. Otherwise, this might help in causing her downfall," Eden Marcellana, Karapatan secretary general, said.

Juvilyn Salazar of Task Force Tanggol Karapatan, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview that De los Santos, a resident of Barangay San Andres, Tanay, Rizal was married and had seven children.

Until his death, De los Santos, or Kano as he was fondly called, was secretary general of a group of Dumagats known as Maskada (Makabayang Samahan ng Katutubong Dumagat).

De los Santos had also been involved in protest actions during the Marcos years.

"He was one of those who spearheaded the protest rally against the construction of the Laiban Dam in Rizal province, which was supposedly intended as a source of water for a hydro electric power plant," she added.

Salazar said "until his death, De los Santos remained active in vigorously opposing government projects . . . which are destructive (for the Dumagats)."

"The fallen Dumagat had been proven to be a good leader, organizer and campaigner in various protest movements in his locality or even in Manila," she said. *Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Ramos allies lobby Palace to retain Agno River agency

BAGUIO CITY—Politicians identified with former President Fidel Ramos have launched a lobby campaign in Malacañang for the retention of a commission created during the Ramos administration and which is facing termination under the government's cost-cutting plans.

Speaker Jose de Venecia leads a Pangasinan contingent in the House of Representatives that intends to fight for the retention of the three-year-old Agno River Basin Development Commission (ARBDC).

The ARBDC is one of 46 commissions, task forces and agencies which are targeted for "mergers, terminations or retentions" depending on their fiscal viability, ARBDC Executive Director Benjamin de Leon told the INQUIRER on Tuesday.

In a Nov. 12 letter to Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, De Venecia asked Malacañang to consider the "critical role" the ARBDC played in "legitimizing" the $1.1-billion San Roque multipurpose dam project (SRMDP).

The SRMDP is a flagship project began during Ramos' term and which his successors, Joseph Estrada and Ms Macapagal, have pursued.

DE VENECIA

RAMOS

De Leon said ARBDC was organized in 1997 to fulfill one of 17 conditions demanded by the government of Itogon, Benguet, in exchange for a favorable SRMDP endorsement.

But the ARBDC is also the only river basin management institution in existence with an influential oversight power over the use of 8,013-square kilometers of river ecosystems within Northwestern Luzon provinces like Pangasinan, Tarlac and Benguet, said Joseph Alabanza, a former presidential assistant on urban development under the Ramos administration.

Romulo and Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin head the Presidential Committee on Effective Governance, which is reviewing the "cost-effectivity" of 46 agencies, commissions and task forces being financed by the Office of the President, De Leon said.

De Leon, who oversaw negotiations in the SRMDP in 1997, said De Venecia's group sees the ARBDC's abolition as a "breach of agreement (forged between government) and local communities affected by the SRMDP and the Ambuklao and Binga hydroelectric plants."

The group also sees the ARBDC as a convenient fund window for donors that deal with non-traditional causes such as watershed management, he said.

"The growing international support to river basin management has expanded the potential resources available for the ARBDC to pursue its mandate. Many Official Development Assistance (ODA) donors are interested to provide financial support to projects on river basin management," De Venecia wrote Romulo.

"The ARBDC has so far shepherded the submission to (the) Japan International Cooperation Agency (for) funding of a project proposal on integrated watershed management (in) the basin. It has likewise held informal talks with the Swedish International Development Assistance for possible areas of cooperation." *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Prospects dim mill workers will get wages

FLORIDABLANCA, Pampanga—The prospect of 645 workers of the Pampanga Sugar Mills (Pasumil) here of getting P17 million in back wages and benefits turned more remote last November.

This, as two camps wrestle control over the proceeds of the sale of pieces of equipment and scrap materials left in the 80-year-old, debt-ridden mill foreclosed by the Philippine National Bank.

The National Labor Relations Commission ordered the sale of the items on behalf of the workers. The NLRC decision, however, came six years after the Pasumil union filed the case in 1994.

The battle between the New Pasumil Workers Union and broadcaster Waldy Carbonell, who claimed to have bought the right from the union to sell the property, intensified last month.

Policemen

Each camp got policemen to their sides.

The union has the support of the Pampanga police. Carbonell, on the other hand, has sought help from some policemen from the National Capital Region police office and from the Philippine National Police's narcotics group.

The Pampanga police intervened in the conflict after the Department of Labor and Employment recognized Reolito Dale as the union president and not Eduardo Puno, whom Carbonell reportedly installed illegally, a certification from DOLE regional director Ana Dione showed.

NLRC officials accompanied Dale on Nov. 9 to take actual possession of the items, which the union won in a bidding on Sept. 7, NLRC records showed.

Pasumil's ownership was passed from Hawaiian sugar specialist R. Renton Hind, the Bueno family, the late Marcos crony Roberto Benedicto and then to Dr. Ruben Camurungan.

Deep into debt, the Pasumil was placed under the Asset Privatization Trust. Camurungan's efforts to revive the mill during the Aquino administration proved futile.

Mill assets

The mill stopped operating in 1989, with Camurungan still asking the court to stop the sale of the mill's assets in 1993. The workers stepped in to get their due shares in case of a sale or none.

The union clashed with Carbonell when the latter took over Pasumil on Nov. 12 this year. Carbonell was charged with physical injuries and grave threats.

Senior Insp. Norberto Arguelles of the NCR police and Chief Insp. Leonardo Suan of the narcotics group, who led some 10 armed policemen in the taking of Pasumil, are facing administrative charges.

Carbonell has found a buyer in businessman Nestor Co, according to a copy of a civil case that Dale filed to stop the sale.

Senior Supt. Ismael Rafanan, Pampanga police director, said he ordered the arrest of the NCR policemen. The arrest order foiled the mill's takeover on orders of Chief Supt. Reynaldo Berroya, Central Luzon police director.

Workers hurt

Berroya said the police acted because several workers were hurt and there was a need to stop the conflict from turning more violent.

Carbonell, in a complaint filed on Nov. 26 with the office of Interior Secretary Jose Lina Jr., accused Rafanan of being a "partner or beneficiary from the countless harassment and attack upon our business so he and criminal, jueteng cohorts can take over our operations."

Carbonell, in his four-page letter to Lina, identified the "jueteng financier" he was referring to as Mike Catacutan.

According to Carbonell, Dale and Catacutan stole the mill's equipment. But Rafanan said Catacutan is not a jueteng financier but a scrap metal dealer.

Rafanan also said the Carbonell Law Office, where Carbonell is an administrator and his son Walden is an associate, "does not have the legal authority to sell the auctioned Pasumil property."

Agreement

An agreement between the union and the law office merely assured legal assistance to the workers, Rafanan explained, citing the findings of labor arbiters.

"(The elder) Carbonell interpreted the MOA (memorandum of agreement) to his advantage and arrogated upon himself the authority to sell the auctioned property," Rafanan said in a letter to Lina.

Carbonell showed reporters two agreements. The first, dated Aug. 24, 2001, was signed by Dale while the second, dated Oct. 12, 2001, was signed by Puno. Puno's name was inserted on blank spaces reserved for the name of the union president.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

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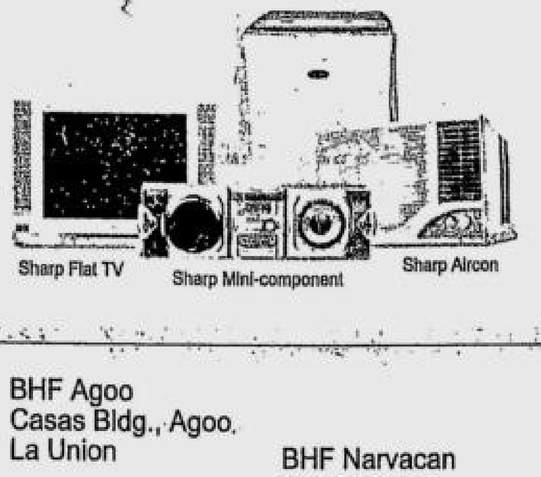
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Drilon, Roco in coco levy row

(From page A1)

ment on the coco levy funds now amounting to P50 billion.

PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac said last week that the PCGG wanted to know the real owners of the holding firms so that it could determine whether poor coconut farmers or members of the Cocofed would benefit from the coco levy shares in San Miguel that it had sequestered.

The shares, representing 31 percent of San Miguel, were acquired using the coco levy that the government collected from 1973 to 1982.

Drilon and Roco's initials

The holding companies have the same initials as Drilon (FMD) and Roco (RSR) and their peers.

"The corporate names of some were beautifully encoded unto particular names of particular stockholders," Chavez said.

The other holding firms with Accra lawyers' initials are Anglo Ventures Corp. (Avelino V. Cruz, not Presidential Legal Counsel Avelino J. Cruz), Te Deum Resources (Teodoro D. Regala) and Randy Allied Ventures (named after Rogelio A. Vinluan).

But a source said junior Accra partners formed the holding companies and named some of the firms after the senior Accra partners to ingratiate themselves with them.

AP Holdings, ARC Investors Inc., ASC Investors Inc. and Toda Holdings, Valhalla Properties were also used by Accra to hide the beneficial owners of the San Miguel shares.

Hiding real owners

These companies, which were sequestered during the Aquino administration, were believed to be dummies used by former President Ferdinand Marcos and Cojuangco, to acquire shares in SMC using funds generated from the levy paid by coconut farmers.

A source in the coconut industry said Accra chief Jose Concepcion was tasked with assembling two to four teams composed of the best and brightest legal minds in the country to draw up a labyrinthine corporate structure to hide the real owners of the holding companies.

The source said the lawyers of these firms should not invoke client confidentiality because the issue was a matter of national interest.

10 plus 4

Chavez said the 10 holding firms—along with Fernandez Holdings, Roxas shares, Soriano shares, and SMC Officers Corps Inc.—were used to acquire the 33.133 million SMC shares held by the Soriano Group at P50 per share on Dec. 15, 1983. The shares represent the 31-percent equity of San Miguel that the PCGG has sequestered.

Chavez said the coco levy funds were funneled into the holding companies through six oil mills in the form of equity investments and loans from the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB), which was then owned by Cojuangco. The oil mills were Cagayan de Oro Oil Co., Gran Export Manufacturing Corp.; Iligan Coconut Industries Inc.; Legaspi Oil Co.; San Pablo Manufacturing and Southern Luzon Coconut Oil Mill).

Roco first lawyered for Cojuangco before moving to Andres Soriano III, who succeeded Cojuangco in San Miguel, according to Chavez.

"*Diyan nag-lagareng hapon si Roco* (He worked both sides of the street)," Chavez said.

Roco represented sellers

But Roco merely represented the sellers of the 31-percent San Miguel shares in the 14 holding corporations that had been purchased by the companies of the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) when he was still with Accra, said a source privy to the transactions.

The source said the transactions were "aboveboard and transparent."

Roco, who was the corporate secretary and executive vice -president of SMC in 1982, represented and arranged for the creation of 14 holding companies where the San Miguel shares bought by CIIF were held.

The source said Roco represented Soriano Shares Inc., Anscor Shares Inc., Roxas shares Inc., Fernandez Holdings Inc., SMC Officers Corps Inc., Toda Holdings Inc., among others.

For the sale of the San Miguel shares to CIIF, Roco earned "attorney's fees," according to the source.

Roco, who joined the Accra law office in 1976, was one of the senior partners of the law firm when it helped set up the 14 holding companies.

The source said the Accra lawyers whose initials were used in setting up of the holding firms had also helped incorporate the firms to represent some 20,000 stockholders who had also sold their San Miguel shares to CIIF.

"*Kaliwaan ito,*" the source said.

But the source claimed that Roco, who represented the sellers, did not know why the San Miguel shares were all sold to CIIF.

The source said Roco represented the sale of the publicly listed shares of Andres Soriano, Benigno Toda, Antonio and Eduardo Roxas, Jose Fernandez, Benigno Toda, and the San Miguel Officers' Corps Inc.

In the dark about real buyer

The source said Roco did not know who was the principal behind the buyer of these shares.

He said Roco protected his clients in the sale of the SMC shares to CIIF.

In her statement to the Senate on Nov. 27, Yorac said Cocofed, controlled by Cojuangco and Ma. Clara Lobregat, decided that the coco levy be used to purchase 31 percent of the SMC shares from the 14 holding companies.

"Obviously, buying into the beer industry has nothing to do with the lives of small coconut farmers. Once again, the lawyers of Accra were behind this purchase," Yorac's statement said.

"They took over or set up 14 holding companies," she said.

The source said that Roco, as representative of the sellers, got the attorneys' fees for consolidating his clients' San Miguel shares in the holding companies.

Even the shares of the 20,000 stockholders were distributed to the holding companies under the name of the Accra lawyers.

The Soriano shares were put in one holding company, Anscor Holdings. For Roxas, they formed Roxas Holdings.

"(But) there were 20,000 other stockholders who were selling. Visualize, how do you deal with 20,000 people?" he asked.

"So you form that 20,000 into holding companies," he said.

Those 20,000 were distributed into these holding companies that bore the name of the Accra senior partners, the source explained.

The CIIF companies were not listed companies, he said.

The incorporation of the holding companies was a "tax-free exchange," the source said.

Identify owners

In a meeting with the Church-backed Multi-Sectoral Task Force on the Coco Levy, Yorac said it was imperative that the principal owners of the holding companies be identified before any interim agreement like the proposed establishment of a trust fund for coconut farmers could be formulated.

The Task Force, chaired by Bishop-Businessmen's Conference national chair Jose Concepcion Jr., met with Yorac on Dec. 7.

If the coco levy shares in San Miguel were sold before resolving their status, the proposed trust fund would still be controlled by the principals of the holding firms, according to Yorac.

Yorac noted that the withdrawal of the Cocofed or Cojuangco through a quit-claim agreement would not be sufficient without the principals.

Task Force member Mario Ongkiko proposed that the government ask the holding companies through their assignees, the Accra lawyers, to issue an absolute and unconditional deed of assignment to the PCGG to facilitate the establishment of the trust fund.

Ani moves closer to impeachment

(From page A1)

plaint. Three—Isabela Rep. Antonio Abaya, Ilocos Norte Rep. Roque Ablan and Siquijor Rep. Orlando Fua Jr.—voted against it. Only Quezon Rep. Aleta Suarez abstained.

If 72, or one-third of the 215-member House of Representatives, supported the complaint, Desierto would face trial in the Senate.

Desierto nevertheless welcomed the committee decision.

"It's good . . . and I am happy because now the House can go into the meat of the complaint," said Desierto, who stressed that he was also after the "sufficiency of the form (of the complaint)."

The committee's decision paves the way for the holding of a meeting next week to determine whether the complaint filed by Francisco on Nov. 6 was "sufficient in substance."

Desierto said that if the complaint was found sufficient in substance, "the complaint can proceed faster and go immediately to the substance, which in my view does not exist anyway."

In the Senate, Sen. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito said Desierto deserved to be impeached for bribery because he had been very biased in all the cases he handled, especially against her husband, former President Joseph Estrada.

Ejercito said Desierto's predicament was a way of telling the Ombudsman that he should shape up.

"He is suffering from karma because he is too vindictive," Ejercito said in Taglish. "You know Desierto, when he speaks, he always hits a person. He has nothing positive to say."

Misamis Occidental Rep. Oscar Moreno, who was the first to endorse the complaint, said Francisco's complaint was "far superior" than the impeachment complaint that was filed a year ago against Estrada.

Moreno said the complainant was Francisco himself, who was an active participant in the bribery case against Estrada.

Moreno, a prosecutor in the impeachment trial of Estrada, said that the outcome of yesterday's hearing showed that the members of the committee were sincere in trying to find out the truth behind the complaint.

Boomerang

He disclosed that efforts by Desierto's allies to seek the support of the committee members by making the rounds in Congress had "boomeranged."

The next meeting of the justice committee is on Dec.18 or two days before Congress adjourns for the Christmas holidays, according to its chair Eastern Samar Rep. Marcelino Libanan.

"I am ready to face the committee. I am ready to answer the questions asked of me and to present the evidence that will show that Desierto accepted a bribe," Francisco told reporters after the committee meeting that lasted more than three hours.

Explaining why he found the complaint insufficient in form, Abaya said found out that his copy of Francisco's complaint was not notarized properly.

His copy, he said, did not list down the required document number, book number and page number of the notary public.

Abaya said he wanted to clarify this before the voting but Libanan had already ruled for the voting to take place.

Libanan then explained that the original copy of Francisco's complaint was duly notarized as he showed it to the members.

Francisco later told reporters that he would check how this happened.

"As a lawyer, before I filed my complaint, I checked everything," he said.

Those who said the complaint was sufficient in form were Representatives Moreno, Oscar Rodriguez, Danton Bueser, Laurence Wacnang, Eladio Jala, Romualdo Vicencio, Antonio Cuenco, Salacnib Baterina, Oscar Gozos, Roy Pilando, Belma Cabilao, Arthur Defensor, Reynaldo Uy, Prospero Nograles, Ernie Clarete, Antonio Floirendo Jr., Raul Villareal, Edgar Chatto, Harlin Abayon, Leovigildo Banaag, Alipio Badelles, Douglas Cagas, Monico Puentevella, Antonio Nachura, Joseph Durano, Liza Maza, Zenaida Cruz-Ducut, Joaquin Chipeco Jr., Celso Lobregat, Didagen Dilangalen, Neptali Gonzales Jr., Allan peter Cayetano, Tet Garcia and Constantino Jaraula.

Other House members who supported Francisco's complaint were Bayan Muna Representatives Satur Ocampo and Crispin Beltran, Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales and Rep. Robert Ace Barbers.

At the hearing, Abaya warned that Francisco would be liable for violating the law on the privacy of communications for his disclosure of a supposed taped conversation where Roxas admitted the P400,000 bribe to Desierto.

Violation of privacy

Abaya said Francisco could have violated Republic Act 4200, the law which prohibits and penalizes wire-tapping and other related violations of the privacy of communications.

Abaya lost his cool as he noted the newspaper headline about the bribery talk was based on a tape.

Francisco played to reporters a tape of a three-minute excerpt from the meeting where Roxas allegedly admitted ordering Francisco to give P500,000 and beta camera parts to Desierto in exchange for sitting on a case in 1997.

Abaya demanded to know whether Francisco wanted a fair or impartial hearing of his complaint or wanted to resort to "trial by publicity."

"That is what got my ire," Abaya told reporters after the hearing.

Overall Deputy Ombudsman Margarito Gervacio came to the House to lend support to Desierto.

But Gervacio said he was just "performing my job" and should not be seen as lobbying on behalf of his boss.

Gervacio said the impeachment case against Desierto was part of the destabilization plot against the different branches of government.

"This is part of the destabilization of the government (as you can see all the lead agencies) have been shaken down," Gervacio said.

Asked if Estrada is behind the destabilization, he said: "Not really but people close to him."

Gervacio defended Desierto saying he could vouch that he was "clean" and that there was "no truth" to Francisco's claims.

Moreno wondered why Gervacio and his investigators were all in attendance.

Moreno said a reliable source told him some of those coming from the Ombudsman's office had secretly congratulated Francisco.

Desierto noted that the audio tape presented by Francisco to reporters on Tuesday did not mention his name or the Ombudsman's Office.

"I was not (present during the conversation). How can I talk to them? How can I be (mentioned) in the audio tape? So where did the conclusion that I was bribed on tape come from?" he said.

Desierto was referring to a supposed meeting on Oct. 26, 2001 between Roxas, two vice presidents of a Roxas real estate firm, two former Accra lawyers and Hillary Evidente, Roxas' secretary.

Desierto said Francisco's latest attempt to back up his allegations "is clearly a gimmickry to drum up support for the complaint (for impeachment) against me."

With reports from Cynthia D. Balana

3 sisters beg Gloria . . .

(From page A1)

they said in a letter to the President. "We hope that you'll grant our wish as soon as possible."

The letter was reportedly given to Ms Macapagal when she visited Negros Occidental on Nov. 24, shortly after her return from a state visit to the United States. A copy of the letter was furnished the INQUIRER yesterday.

Tomaro's three daughters told the President that they needed her help because their father had been jailed for a crime he did not and will never commit.

They said they had not lost hope that they will be reunited with their father because they know that the President "is ready to help the poor like us."

Tomaro, 39, and four of the six other Filipinos who have been accused of killing Canadian engineer Luc Ethier have been detained in Kuwait since Oct. 27.

The other accused were Ethier's wife Mary Jane Bitos, Jaime Binuya, Edgar Robea, Noraisa Esick, Lourdes Viray and Rosario Baclig.

All of them were presented for inquest at the Department of Justice on Nov. 27, except for Bitos, who is still confined at the Farwaniya Hospital, and Robea, who was then under investigation and had just been extradited from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Robea was allowed to post bail pending the results of the investigation. He is now staying at the Philippine ambassador's residence.

Legal panel

In their letter to the President, the Tomaro children said they were grateful to the Macapagal administration for sending to Kuwait a legal panel to help defend their father and his co-accused. They said they could not afford to hire legal services.

The children are studying at the Negros Occidental High School here. Rhoda is a high school junior, while the twins are sophomores.

Their mother Reana, 37, a Grade 2 teacher at the Jorge L. Araneta Elementary School in Bago City, had earlier written a letter to Ms Macapagal to ask for her help.

She said she had not talked to Teody since his arrest and that she feared that he might be forced to confess to the killing because he had no lawyer to assist him when he was arrested.

Teody started working as a plumber at Al-Firtas Tower in Kuwait in 1993. His contract was to expire in May next year.

He and five other Filipinos were arrested in Kuwait after they were accused of killing Ethier, 36, of Montreal, Quebec, who worked as an aircraft technician at the Ahmed Al Jaber Air Base.

Ethier was shot dead on Oct. 10 while he and his Filipino wife, Mary Jane Bitos, were reportedly out for an evening stroll in Fahaheel, a shopping area south of Kuwait City.

An Associated Press report, quoting a Kuwaiti interior ministry, said Bitos and her five accomplices, including Teody, allegedly admitted to killing Ethier to collect his insurance money.

Implicated

Raena said her children broke down and cried when they learned from a television news program that their father was implicated in the killing.

"I told them to pray hard because that will be the only answer to his fate," she said.

Raena said she last talked to Teody on Oct. 21 when he informed her that he had been implicated in the killing because the victim used to live at Al-Firtas Tower where he worked.

She said her husband was picked up by Kuwaiti police on Oct. 20 but was released the next day. One of Teody's companions later told Raena that her husband was again arrested on Oct. 27.

Raena said she learned from her husband's co-employees that Vitos had insisted that Ethier's killer was a Kuwaiti. But the Kuwaiti was released while the five Filipinos were rounded up.

Acting Foreign Secretary Merlin Magallona yesterday said measures were being taken by the Philippine Embassy in Kuwait to ensure that the seven Filipinos will be cleared.

Magallona said the General Department on Criminal Investigation (Weapon Technical Inspection Division) of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior had already confirmed that the gun allegedly used by Tomaro in killing the Canadian and submitted by the prosecutor for examination was not the same one used in the shooting.

In a letter to Reana, Magallona said the Office of the Undersecratary for Migrant Workers Affairs has been continuously coordinating with the Philippine Embassy for the protection of the Filipinos.

He said Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait Sukarno Tanggol had engaged the services of Kuwaiti lawyers Ahmad Qurban and Masheal Bouriky to handle the defense.

Magallona also said the Department of Foreign Affairs would be sending a team to Kuwait to work closely with the Philippine Embassy on the case.

Opposition: Tiglao 'talks too much'

(From page A1)

Rigoberto Tiglao "talks too much" when he should be the first to observe his boss' call for a moratorium on political bickering.

"They're the ones destabilizing their own government, not Estrada," Ejercito said in Filipino. "Estrada is in prison. He can't do anything because he's in prison."

The former first lady also said Tiglao should stop hitting the opposition, particularly Sen. Panfilo Lacson, because he had no proof to support his allegations.

Lacson himself said Tiglao should stop telling "lies" about the senator's supposed role in the negotiation for the release of American missionaries Martin and Gracia Burnham and Filipino nurse Ediborah Yap, all hostages of the Abu Sayyaf.

He insisted that the payment of ransom was not included in the negotiation, and that there was a "story" on why he was sure the hostages would be released in a matter of days.

Tiglao had earlier challenged Lacson to explain his real role in the negotiation and why he was chosen by his supposed Malaysian contact to help.

Pressed yesterday to accept the challenge, Lacson said: "I don't want to talk about it." He said he did not want to become a member of "Tiglao's club," which he called the "*taratitat* club."

"I have to talk too much," Tiglao countered, "because they are spreading too many lies," Tiglao said. "Fewer lies, less talk," he added.

"We are not wimps. We will fight lies every inch of the way."

Also GMA

Sen. Edgardo Angara said the proposed moratorium should also apply to the President, whom he accused of "politicking."

"She does not understand that what she is asking for is a moratorium on political criticism," Angara added in Taglish. "But if there would be no criticism, of what use is the opposition? What would its role be?"

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel said the opposition would cooperate with the President in her programs for the good of the country but would stay true to its mandate to check those in power.

"Let me say that the suggestion (for a moratorium) is good only up to a point," Pimentel said. "It cannot be construed to mean that the opposition should stop exposing official wrongdoing. Otherwise, the opposition would become a party to the official anomalies that sap the vitality of the nation."

Angara said the President and her men should start doing something good so that the opposition would find no need to criticize.

According to Angara, the President should discipline Tiglao because he has been hurling unfounded charges against the opposition.

To the rescue

But National Security Adviser Roilo Golez told reporters at a briefing that Tiglao's criticism of Lacson was not exactly without basis.

Golez said the Malaysian Sairin Karno, whom Lacson allegedly met with in Sabah last week, had earlier tried to get a lucrative deal from the Philippine government in exchange for the release of the hostages taken from a Palawan resort on May 27.

He said that "in late June or early July," Abu Sayyaf spokesperson Abu Sabaya gave Karno's phone number to government negotiator William Castillo with the information that Karno would serve as negotiator for the hostage takers.

Golez also said Karno and Castillo talked several times but came to no agreement because "this guy who claims to be Sairin Karno and who we believe is Sairin Karno started making demands."

He said the "most interesting" of the demands was a concession for Philippine rice imports.

"There's no way that we can grant him that concession because that is even worse than (paying) ransom," Golez said he told Castillo.

Golez said he was surprised at Lacson's admission that Karno sought a meeting in Sabah "to join the negotiation."

He said he was "amazed" at Lacson's claim that the ongoing negotiation was "between the Abu Sayyaf and the Malaysian government," and did not involve the Philippine government.

"The Malaysian government already disowned (Karno)," Golez said. "(And) this is an internal matter. I don't think Malaysia would get into the picture. Malaysia knows that and Senator Lacson should also know that."

At the same briefing, Tiglao described as "quite appalling" Lacson's claim that Malaysia would meet the Abu Sayyaf's demands.

"It is only the Philippine Republic that has the authority to deal with this hostage situation," Tiglao said. "The recovery of the hostages is not a matter between Malaysia and the Abu Sayyaf."

Good friend

Golez and Tiglao were earlier reported at odds. This was in connection with Golez's supposed role as the President's "spokesperson on terrorism" shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States.

It came to a point that the two men gave separate briefings in Malacañang in a day.

But at yesterday's briefing, Golez referred to Tiglao as his "good friend."

Tiglao, on the other hand, said Golez knew more about Karno and the Abu Sayyaf, being the "top spy chief."

Bombings resume; al-Qaida forces choose to die

(From page A1)

mountainside canyon.

While one local commander said the surrender might still take place, others doubted the men would give up.

It appeared from a distance that bombs from several circling B-52s and other US warplanes directly hit the canyon. Others appeared to fall on other al-Qaida positions nearby in the Tora Bora and Milawa valleys, which are riddled with hundreds of caves and tunnels. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Witnesses said 60 men, who appeared to be American personnel, were seen near the front line Wednesday. They were wearing Afghan shawls and floppy pacole caps, but were carrying what the witnesses said were US-made weapons and backpacks.

An alliance subcommander said 40 British special operations troops also were fighting in the valley.

Pentagon officials warned that some al-Qaida members might still be hiding in the underground network. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said holdouts might continue to fight and that "a wounded animal can be dangerous."

The whereabouts of Bin Laden remained unclear. Some US officials and tribal leaders suspect he might be in or near Tora Bora in eastern Afghanistan. Others believe he is hiding in the country's south.

Surrender procedure

Even as some tribal fighters doubted the al-Qaida forces would give up, an eastern alliance commander said the surrender could still place.

"They are running late. But they have agreed to come down the mountain in groups of 20 to 40 men," said Mohammed Lal, a senior alliance officer. "We are clearing the area to make a safe place for their surrende :."

He said the al-Qaida fighters would ride vehicles down from the canyon to an alliance checkpoint where they would be disarmed and searched.

Trucks would then take them to the alliance's command post at Agom village, about 5 km to the southeast, where they would be detained.

Lal said he did not know why the bombing had taken place or who had done the shooting. He also did not say why the surrender had been delayed.

However, the Pakistan-based news agency, Afghan Islamic Press, said the al-Qaida troops, mainly Arabs, were demanding that diplomats from their home nations be present along with a UN representative.

They also wanted to be handed over to the United Nations, something the alliance reportedly promised.

It estimated the size of the force at 1,000 men from Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Yemen, Iraq and Chechnya. The report could not be independently verified.

The eastern alliance overran al-Qaida's positions on Tuesday and gave their mainly Arab opponents until 8 a.m. (0330 GMT) Wednesday to abandon the Tora Bora area or face a massive attack.

A ceasefire was declared after some al-Qaida fighters used a two-way radio to beg for mercy after they were pinned down in the canyon.

Bombing raids

US warplanes also carried out bombing raids before dawn in the area on Wednesday. There were unconfirmed reports of some alliance tank fire through the night.

As the surrender deadline passed, a B-52 bomber flew menacingly over Tora Bora, leaving a spiraling white vapor trail in the blue sky. It dropped its payload about an hour later.

More B-52s carried out further strikes through the morning and US fighter jets roared above the scene.

For days, US planes have made relentless bombing raids, including 6,800-kg "daisy cutter" bombs that flattened hillsides and left massive craters.

Gen. Richard B. Myers, chair of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, said in Washington there were "literally thousands" of caves in the Tora Bora area.

He said American troops entered some caves, but added he did not know if they had been used by the al-Qaida.

Myers described Tora Bora, in the towering White Mountains of eastern Afghanistan along the border with Pakistan, as "the last effective al-Qaida stronghold."

Gen. Tommy Franks, the US commander of the war, sent at least several Air Force AC-130 gunships to the Tora Bora area to team up with Predator unmanned surveillance planes.

Predators can feed real-time video of ground activity to the gunships, which are capable of unleashed devastating attacks on ground targets with their 40mm cannon, 105mm howitzer, and 25mm Gatling gun.

Kandahar

In southern Afghanistan, US Marines patrolled roads leading from the fallen Taliban city of Kandahar, searching for Taliban and al-Qaida fugitives.

Marine spokesperson Capt. David Romley said low-ranking Taliban soldiers from Afghanistan who surrender their arms would be allowed to go free, but those who refuse would be killed.

Tuesday's advance on Tora Bora occurred three months after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, which the United States has blamed on Bin Laden. US President George W. Bush launched air strikes on Afghanistan on Oct. 7 after the former ruling Taliban refused to hand over Bin Laden. ***AP***

Palace: Nur not going to another country

(From page A1)

"We simply wanted Malaysia to complete their investigation following their own laws," Golez added. "But we will not in any way be misconstrued as appearing like we are pressuring them or hurrying them up."

Vice President and Foreign Secretary Teofisto Guingona also expressed confidence that Misuari would be deported to the Philippines before he could be spirited from Malaysia to another member-state of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

"I don't think the Malaysian government would let Nur Misuari go to a third country without first informing the Philippine government," Guingona told reporters in an ambush interview. "It is not impossible but it is improbable. I don't think that would happen."

Golez said the Philippines was prepared to "wait" until Malaysia was through with investigating Misuari.

Asked when Misuari's deportation was expected, Golez said: "No timetable yet."

He said this was dependent on how the two governments would work out the transfer protocols.

"Perhaps in the next few days we will find out whether it will be before the end of the year or shortly after the start of the new year," he said.

Security

Golez said Misuari, who is facing charges of rebellion here, would be held in a government detention facility outside of Mindanao.

"For security reasons we are not going to disclose it. But he will be in a safe place," Golez said.

While Misuari "may have sympathizers, he also has enemies," Golez said, adding: "We have to make sure he is away from this." Tiglao said Malaysia had in fact asked the Philippines whether it was prepared to take back Misuari, and received an affirmative answer.

"As soon as they have no more need for him, then very likely our transport plane will take him back," Tiglao said.

He also said the two governments were observing "mutual respect" over Misuari's case.

"We are not hurrying them up. They weren't really bugging us to get Misuari right away," he said.

Apart from violation of its immigration laws, Malaysia investigated Misuari for his alleged involvement in the abductions conducted last year by the Abu Sayyaf in the Malaysian island of Sipadan. Malaysian police said there was no evidence to back this.

An unnamed Malaysian official was earlier quoted as saying that Misuari would be given safe passage to another country if the Philippines continued to delay taking him back.

"It seems Manila wants to wash its hands," the official was reported as saying. "If they do not want Misuari, then we can give him safe passage to a third country."

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Kuala Lumpur earlier confirmed that Misuari was seeking political asylum.

Rebellion

But Eduardo Ermita, the President's adviser on the peace process, said the Philippine government through its ambassador to the UN would make its position clear that Misuari was not qualified to ask for political asylum anywhere.

"How can Misuari be invited for asylum by another country when he has committed an act of rebellion for which he has a warrant of arrest?" Ermita told reporters in Bacolod City.

He also said the government would seek Misuari's repatriation by early January at the latest so he could face the rebellion charges filed against him.

Ermita pointed out that Misuari was no longer chair of the Moro National Liberation Front and did not represent its interests.

"He is not a revolutionary leader anymore, he is a criminal," Ermita said.

According to Ermita, the Department of Foreign Affairs will inform the UN High Commission for Refugees that Misuari is charged with rebellion for causing the death of 120 people in his followers' attack on Jolo last month, and for the subsequent hostage taking of civilians in Cabatangan, Zamboanga City.

Ermita also said the report that Indonesia had issued an invitation to Misuari for him to travel to that country for an OIC meeting was not true.

He said it was the OIC's position not to interfere in the internal matters of the Philippines, especially in Misuari's case.

Fighters

About 400 MNLF fighters are expected to return to the fold of the law today, the Armed Forces' Southern Command said yesterday in Zamboanga City.

Col. Francisco Gundani, Southcom deputy chief for operations, said the fighters included those who took hostage at least 100 residents of Pasonanca on Nov. 27-29.

Gundani said the fighters led by Julhambrie Misuari and Bashier Jalani had agreed to leave Barangay Panubigan, where they sought refuge after the hostage taking.

He said the group had also agreed to the condition imposed by the military and ARMM officials that they "leave the place without their firearms."

A simple turnover ceremony will be held in Panubigan for the occasion. Jesus Dureza, the President's assistant for Mindanao affairs, and ARMM Gov. Parouk Hussin are expected to attend.

"It shows that Governor Hussin is effective in dealing with this group, and that he is being recognized as a legitimate leader not only by the ARMM but by the MNLF as well," Gundani said. ***With reports from Norman Bordadora in Manila; Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau; Julie Alipala-Inot, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Poor . . .

(From page A1)

Her government is not in favor of extending the Rent Control Law which expires on Dec. 31.

The law, Republic Act No. 8437, fixes at 15 percent the maximum annual increase in rentals of residential units.

Given Malacañang's stand, the Senate is not likely to pass the bill that seeks to extend that law even though the House of Representatives already approved its version in October.

And the estimated 5.5 million Filipinos nationwide (1990 figures from the National Statistics Office) who have no choice but to rent an apartment will have to bear the burden of paying more.

"The President has said that in terms of pure economic practice, rent control is not positive," presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said yesterday.

"As an economist, that's her statement but she wants to discuss with her advisers what stand she will take" on the proposed legislation seeking to extend the Rent Control Law until 2004, he said.

Rent control discourages residential owners from improving the dwellings they are renting out, Tiglao said. This contributes to urban blight, he added.

Disincentive to investors

Sen. Francis Pangilinan, chair of the Senate committee on housing and resettlement, said the Legislative and Executive Development Advisory Council (Ledac) had reached a consensus that extending the Rent Control Law would be a "disincentive" to future investors in the housing industry.

Pangilinan said this was also the consensus among senators who attended the Senate economic workshop in Clark, Pampanga, on Dec. 2.

The National Economic Development Authority (Neda) made a similar recommendation, according to Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri, principal author of the bill that was passed by the House.

"If there is rent control . . . no one will want to invest anymore in building apartments," Pangilinan said.

Then there will be fewer units that can be rented out, more people will be looking for dwellings where they can live, and this will drive the rent up, Pangilinan said.

On the other hand, if there is no rent control, there will be more investments in housing, more apartment units will become available and rent will go down, he said.

"It's basically the law of supply and demand," Pangilinan said.

But Pangilinan did not say if the law of supply and demand would also solve the problem of where the 917,051 households (5.5 million people) nationwide were supposed to get the additional money to pay for their higher rent.

Still open

Pangilinan said he was still open to "other points of view" on the matter.

"I may be the (housing committee) chairman but I am not the majority in the committee. I will respect the decision of the other members and if the majority is inclined to push for an extension, I will respect that decision," he said.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel had been asking the Senate to pass the bill as he expressed fears that low-income apartment dwellers will be the most affected by the abolition of the rent increase ceiling.

Despite the Palace's pronouncements, Zubiri said he was still hoping Malacañang would change its mind and support the rent control law.

Under Zubiri's bill, apartment owners can impose a maximum increase of 10 percent annually for the next three years. It is supposed to take effect on Jan. 1, 2002. It covers apartments and other dwellings with a monthly rent of P9,000 and below in urbanized areas and P6,000 and below in rural areas.

Zubiri said there was still time to pass the measure because it would take only two days for both houses of Congress to ratify it if the President certifies it as urgent.

But he said the Senate should pass the bill first.

"The ball is now in the Senate," he said.

He said the two houses should just do what is right despite Malacañang's opposition to it.

"We should still pass it and see if Malacañang will find wisdom in supporting a measure beneficial to the greater number of people," he said. ***With a report from Juliet L. Javellana***

Misuari: Unwanted

HAILED as a peacemaker five years ago, Nur Misuari has become a diplomatic pariah—unwanted in his home country, where he fought a war for independence, and in an Islamic state that once gave him shelter.

Three weeks after renewing his fight for a Muslim homeland in the South, the 60-year-old former instructor at the University of the Philippines is being held incommunicado by Malaysian police.

Neither the Philippines nor Malaysia wants Misuari.

Malaysia is concerned about an internal backlash if it hands him back to the Philippines, which, in turn fears that he might become a rallying point for its Muslim minority.

"Why can't he run away somewhere else? Each time he creates trouble back home he flees to Malaysia. It sours up relations with our neighbors," Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad had said.

Earlier, President Macapagal-Arroyo said she preferred Malaysia to hold on to Misuari but would take him after it had finished investigating him.

Her apparent concern is that Misuari in jail might further rouse the country's 5 million Muslims, many of them resentful of the government for its neglect of their largely impoverished communities.

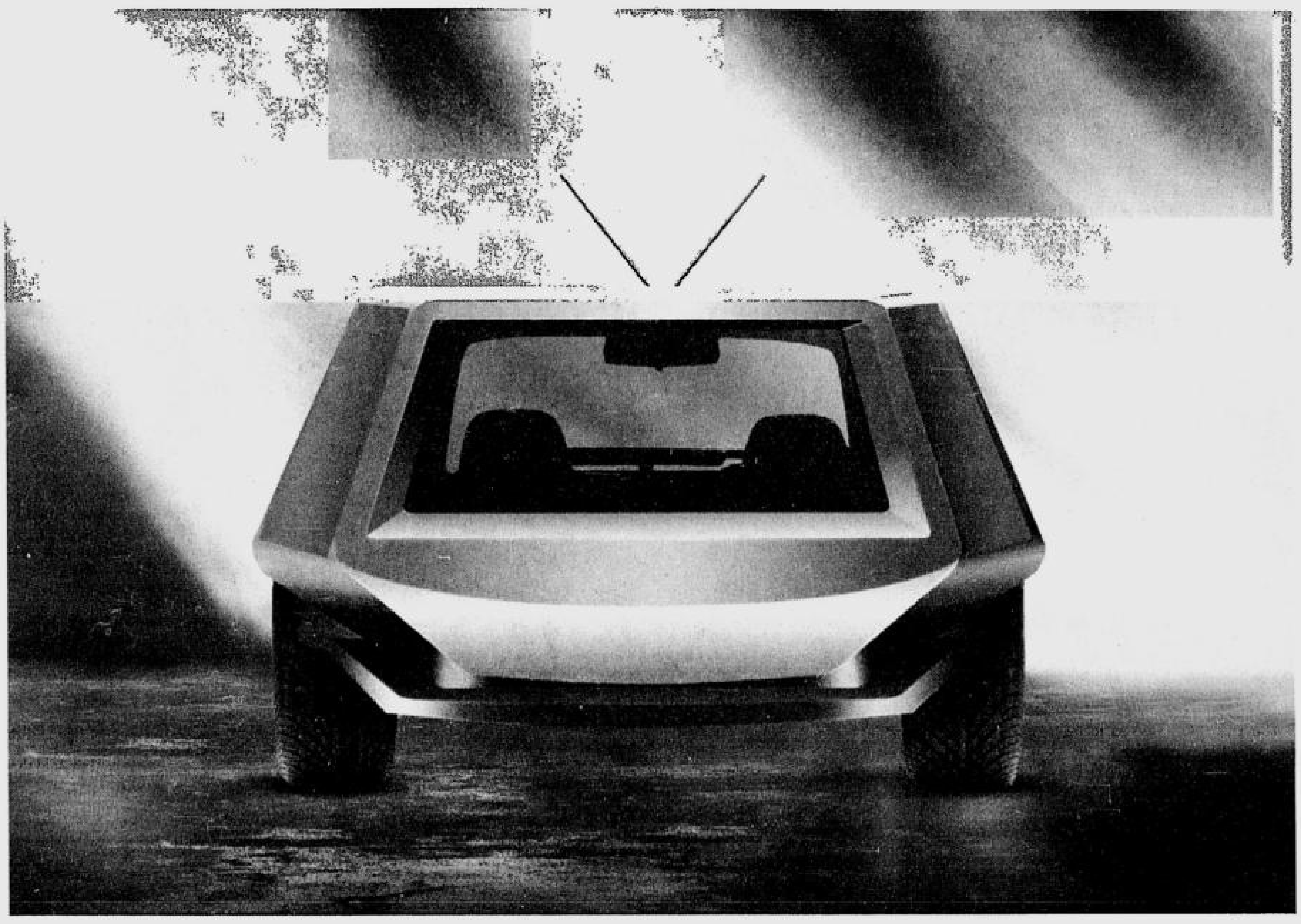
The renegade ex-governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and leader of the separatist Moro National Liberation Front signed a peace deal with the Philippine government in 1996.

The agreement ended a 24-year MNLF revolt for Muslim self-rule in Mindanao.

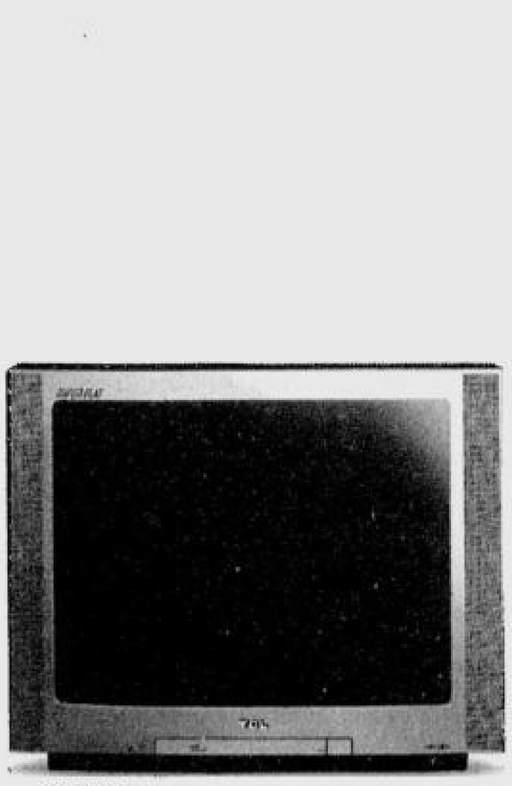
Misuari's efforts brought him the Felix Houphouet Peace Prize, a Unesco-sponsored award also previously given to the late Israeli premier Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yassar Arafat.

The bubble burst last month when hundreds of Misuari diehards staged an uprising on Jolo, Sulu, and seized 118 hostages—later freed—after heavy fighting near Zamboanga City.

The revolt was sparked by Misuari's protests against an election to pick a new ARMM governor, which he said violated the peace accord. *Reuters*



Very soon, cars will be powered partly by petrol, partly by battery and partly by solar energy.



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TCL
Technology that Conquers Limitations

Andok's files leave of absence

By Roy Luarca

THE ANDOK'S San Juan Knights, one of the most popular teams in the MBA, won't be around next year.

Team owner and noted racehorse owner-breeder Sandy Javier filed for a leave of absence Tuesday night, citing economic reasons for his decision to disband the squad which topped the MBA 2000 National Finals and this year's First Phase.

"It's purely economics. Because of ABS-CBN's withdrawal of subsidy, it's no longer feasible for me to maintain the team any further.I would rather use the money to take care of my people or open a new business," said Javier.

"Anyway, I believe I have not been remiss in organizing a superior and champion team, which is already my contribution to the league and San Juan," added Javier, who is also the chair of the Metropolitan Association of Racehorse Owners (Marho).

Javier, however, said he's isn't closing the door on the Knights' return to the MBA "once the situation becomes economically viable or if other sponsors offer to defray expenses."

Well known for his generosity and close relationship with his players, Javier said he had a heart-to-heart talk with each one of them and they understood his plight.

That the Knights failed to defend their Northern Conference crown and reach the National Finals this year made the decision bearable according to Javier. "It would have been very difficult to disband the team had we retained the national title."

The MBA board accepted Javier's decision, but it kept the door open for Andok's' return, should Javier decide to reform the team.

"We have to admit it's painful to let go of a very competitive team. Everybody's having their own difficulties in business but the MBA can withstand the obstacles. There are new teams to fill in the vacuum to be left by San Juan although we cannot say it would be easy to top Andok's achievements in the league," said MBA Commissioner Butch Antonio.

Among the notable Knights are Chris Calaguio, Chito Victolero, Omanzie Rodriguez, Rafi Reavis, Bruce Dacia, Danny Capobres, Gilbert Castillo and Randy Alcantara.

Ramon Tuason, MBA director for marketing and business development, said the league is finalizing talks with two new teams and three returnees to bolster its depleted ranks.

Preparing for their return to the MBA are Pampanga, the 1998 inaugural titlist, Pangasinan and 1999 champion Manila.

This year's National Open champion Spring Cooking Oil, owned and managed by champion shooters father-and-son Tom Ong and Tac Padilla, would make its MBA debut. Spring Cooking Oil is likely to represent Baguio City.

Makati is being formed around a core of players selected by former vice mayor and actor Edu Manzano.

The new Pampanga team will be managed by Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda, while that of Manila is being handled by Councilor Butch Belgica.

Pangasinan will return still under Tim Orbos.

JAVIER

ICTSI seeks Challenge Cup solo top spot

By Dennis U. Eroa

STANDINGS	W	L
Shark	6	3
ICTSI Archers	5	2
Blu	5	3
Welcoat	4	4
Ateneo-Pioneer	4	4
Kutitap	4	5
Ana Freezers	3	5
Montaña	2	7

GAMES TODAY
Makati Coliseum)
3:30 p.m.—ICTSI Archers vs Montaña
5:30 p.m.—Ateneo-Pioneer vs Blu Detergent

INTERNATIONAL Container Terminal Services Inc-Archers shoots for the solo leadership as it collides with tailender Montaña Jewels today in the PBL Challenge Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

The ICTSI-Montaña tussle is set at 3:30 p.m., followed by the Ateneo-Pioneer-Blu Detergent clash at 5:30 p.m. The Insurers are aiming to extend their three-game winning streak against the Detergent Kings, who continue to miss veteran playmaker Ogie Gumatay, who was slapped with a five-game suspension by the Commissioner's Office due to repeated rough plays.

Despite lacking a legitimate center, the Archers are making heads turn with their full-court, trapping defense with pointguards Mike Cortez and Mac Cuan at the forefront.

Montaña is hurting because of its lack of consistency."There are times when we cannot properly execute our plays in the homestretch. But I'm happy with the way my team is taking its losses. We remain in high spirits,"said coach Turo Valenzona.

Defensive demon Francis Zamora is churning out double-double performances, but the 6-foot-5 stalwart needs to get able support from his teammates. Zamora, a former La Salle Green Archer, has established himself as one of the league's top rebounders.

Six-foot-six rookie Billy Mamaril is a doubtful starter with a sprained ankle, but Ateneo-Pioneer is proving that it is capable of giving the favorites a run for their money.

Leo Avenido and Edrick Ferrer give poise to the team, while Enrico Villanueva, Larry Fonacier and Magnum Membrere sizzle with their heads up plays.

MBA FINALS

Batangas takes Game 1

GAME TOMORROW San Andres Gym
5 p.m.—Negros vs Batangas

IN the end, the LBC Batangas Blades proved to be steadier, sharper.

The Blades recovered from the shock of losing a 23-point lead to beat the Negros Slashers, 87-84, last night in the opener of their MBA National Finals at the packed St. La Salle Lipa Sentrum in Lipa City.

Comfortably ahead, 52-29, the Blades suddenly lost their sharpness even as the Slashers caught their stride to wrest the lead at 80-76 with 3 minutes and 33 seconds left.

Eddie Laure wouldn't let his game-long brilliance go to waste, however, making five straight points including a spectacular reverse lay-up, and issuing a pinpoint pass to Romel Adducul to hand the Blades back the rein at 85-82.

Cid White countered for Negros but Tonyboy Espinosa canned two freethrows off a must-foul by Dennis Madrid to seal the outcome with 13 seconds left.

Unable to execute the needed three-point play, the Slashers went to John Ferriols, who was however foiled in his drive.

The Blades seek a 2-0 lead in the best-of-five series at 5 p.m. tomorrow at the San Andres Gym in Manila because of the unavailability of the Sentrum. The next two games are slated at the University of St. La Salle Gym in Bacolod City and, if necessary, Game Five will return to the Sentrum.

Laure wound up with game-highs 23 points and 15 rebounds on top of 4 assists and 2 blocks and was named co-best player of the game watched by thousands of Batangueños led by Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos-Recto.

Others who watched were brothers Santi and Dino Araneta, owner of the Blades, MBA director for marketing and business development Ramon Tuason and ABS-CBN's Peter Musngi.

Sharing honors with Laure was Espinosa, who came through with a clutch triple, a short jumper and the pivotal charities in the last five minutes. He finished with 19 points, 6 rebounds and 2 assists.

Blades coach Nash Racela said he's worried about Game Two because they'd be missing the homecourt edge noting that the crowd served as their sixth man.

Roy Luarca

LBC BATANGAS 87—Laure 23, Espinosa 19, Compton 14, Adducul 14, Martin 11, Serrano 2, Sanders 2, Rivera 0, Corbin 0, Cuevas 0.

NEGROS 84—Ferriols 22, Hugnatan 14, White 13, Dela Rosa 11, Madrid 9, Cardel 8, Aldeguer 7, Tierra 0, Bat-og 0, Huelar 0, Benedicto 0, Ignacio 0.

Quarters: 24-19, 52-31, 69-59, 87-84.

MEMPHIS
33
WIZARDS
23

TOUGH TASK AP

Memphis Grizzlies' Rodney Buford (left) guards Washington Wizards' Michael Jordan during their NBA game Tuesday in Memphis, Tenn. Washington won, 91-81.

Baguio scrabble Dec. 15

BAGUIO CITY—College students will take center stage Dec. 15 and 16 in the Linggo ng Kabataan Scrabble Tournament at the Baguio City Session Hall.

The tournament will draw participation from the eight universities and colleges here as well as computer schools who will battle for "word supremacy," said councilor and Sangguniang Kabataan chair Jonathan Tambol.

The scrabble tourney will be one of the sports in the two-week long Kabataan festivities where cash prizes will be up for grabs.

"Scrabble is one sport where physical strength is not needed. I guess we can excel here," said Tambol, noting also that the city is the education capital of the north where close to 100,000 students are enrolled.

NBA RESULTS

Miami 99, Milwaukee 97; Boston 102, New York 93, OT; Atlanta 89, Philadelphia 87; Washington 91, Memphis 81; Minnesota 107, Golden State 86; New Jersey 107, Chicago 93; Cleveland 107, Houston 102; Dallas 105, Portland 103; Charlotte 99, Denver 96; Sacramento 112, Orlando 100; Seattle 104, L.A. Lakers 93. *AP*

Latagaw Cup slated Friday

THE 1ST Latagaw Cup Open will be held on Friday, Dec. 14, at the Riviera Golf and Country Club in Silang, Cavite. Registration is at 6 a.m. and tee-off is 7 a.m.

The event is supported by Rack's Best Ribs in Town as major sponsors, the Philippine Daily Inquirer, SMART, Direct Link Car Insurance, Jose Antonio Fudolig and Lorenzo Nazareno. Participation fee is P2,000 inclusive of green fee, buffet lunch, giveaway and raffle prize opportunity. Each winner will receive a trophy and merchandize prize.

Organizer of the tournament is the Latagaw Brotherhood Foundation Inc., chaired by Tony Blanco, CEO of Rack's Inc. LBFI is the alumni organization of the UP Latagaw Brotherhood, a university fraternity founded in 1972 with majority of members from the Visayas and Mindanao. "Latagaw" is Cebuano for wanderer. Proceeds will fund LBFI projects in UP Diliman, Cebu, Iloilo and Davao. A sports project that became one of the most popular events in Diliman is the Latagaw Cup, a soccer tournament that has drawn participants not only from UP but also from Ateneo and De La Salle.

Tournament format is 18-hole stroke; rules of play are USGA and where applicable tournament and local rules; to be used is the Modified System 36 handicap computation with a maximum allowable handicap of 28.

For inquiries, call Michelle Lulu at tel. No. 897-9797.

Upsilonians tilt tomorrow

THE UNIVERSITY of the Philippines' Upsilonians Na Pumapalo will hold the 12th tournament for the year tomorrow at Capitol Hills.

At the same time, organizing committee chairman Col. Abe Villanueva said that the Upsilon Sigma Phi, UP's most prestigious and oldest fraternity, will honor members of Batch '51 on Friday.

Villanueva also said that among the surviving Batch '51 Upsilonians include former Cavite Gov. Johnny Remulla, former Meralco and Ayala top honcho Mario D. Camacho and former Defense Undersecretary Fernando Campos.

Speed Show enables Filipinos to see Formula One car

FILIPINOS finally experienced first-hand the thrill of Formula One racing last Nov. 10, when Mild Seven hosted an exhibit of the Mild Seven-Benetton-Renault Formula One car.

The exhibit, dubbed the Mild Seven Speed Show, was held at the premiere party place Eastwood City Walk in Libis, Quezon City. The Mild-Seven sponsored exhibit gave Filipinos a chance to see an authentic Formula One car up close. The Mild Seven-Benetton-Renault Sport B201 is one of the most advanced racing machines in the Formula One circuit and has been driven by the likes of such talented drivers as Jenson Button and Giancarlo Fisichella.

According to Formula One aficionado and Mild Seven Speed Show consultant Trevor Briggs, "Formula One spectators very rarely get near a Formula One car. Fans are usually fenced inside the spectator area and cannot get close to the F1 cars. Thanks to Mild Seven, Filipinos can actually see these amazing driving machines up close."

The Speed Show kicked off with a motorcade through major thoroughfares in Metro Manila and was participated in by some of the prestigious racing clubs in the country. This was then followed by the official unveiling of the Mild Seven F1 car to the public. Exhibit goers were then treated to a number of games and contests wherein winners won original Mild Seven Fl merchandise. The Speed Show culminated in a concert with some of the country's top bands entertaining both exhibit goers and the general public.

According to Dick Sucgang, Mild Seven marketing manager, the event is part of Mild Seven's commitment to give Filipinos the opportunity to experience first-hand the thrill of F1 racing.

"It's very rare for Filipinos to have a first-hand experience of Formula One Racing, this is our way of bringing this exciting sport to them."

Sucgang further revealed that Mild Seven has been an active sponsor of the Formula One Circuit.

"Formula One is a prestigious brand around the world. Thus, it is but natural that Mild Seven, another globally renowned brand, partners itself with Formula One," he said.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1990, Fernando de Asis scored a 14-11 decision over South Korean Jae Hyun Lee to power the Philippines to victory in the second Mayor's Cup international amateur boxing championship at the Folk Arts Theater.

WE COM
TICIPA S AND IEND
THE

ADB'S TEAM

Asian Development Bank's Tsukasa Maekawa (extreme left) receives from Mayor Benhur Abalos (2nd from left) the championship trophy of the 2nd Mayor Benhur Abalos Tennis Invitational Tournament during the awarding ceremony at the Mandaluyong tennis court. The Asian Development Banks's Team edged out this year the defending Diplomats' Team. Others in photo are (from left): Harry Situmorang, Biswanath Bhattacharyay and Marilyn Alberto.

Bumgarner top karter

CD Gulf Oil Racing's Edward Lee Bumgarner clinched the centerpiece Formula 125 title in the final round of MP Turbo's Speedfest 2001 mini kart series held over the weekend at the Le Mans Kartway and the SVI speedway in the SBMA Freeport Zone in Olongapo, Zambales.

Speedfest 2001 is a four-leg multi-motorsport event which was staged at different sites in the SBMA Freeport. Speedfest 2001 is sponsored by Zed, Gulf Oil, BLTB Co., Gatorade, Daye Motorcycles, Timex Watches, Mitsubishi Motors, Francisco Motors Corp., Subic LeMans Kart Track, the Subic International Raceway, Pepsi, SMA Fuels, Shell Advance and the SBMA under the auspices of SBMA Chair Felicito Payumo.

The absence of FedEx pilot Kelly Jones, Bumgarner's top rival for the title, failed to make the races less exciting as Swiss expat Marcel Thenu and Intelco's JP Carino ably filled in Jones' role of antagonist. Thenu, who was quickest in the time trials, battled Bumgarner through 14 laps before retiring with a broken chain in the qualifying run. Carino had his moments as race leader in the early laps of the finals until Bumgarner made one of his patented passing moves to grab the lead and keep it all the way to the checkered flag. Thenu finished in second while German engineer Bert Neshaf settled for the leg's final podium position.

Sagupaan holds 48 fights

THE "1ST Ucap/Sagupaan Altuz 7-Cock Derby" championship round gets going at 6 tonight at Mandaluyong Coliseum with 48 fights on tap. Sponsors are Sagupaan Super Feeds and Wash-out Shampoo.

Leading into today's finale are four cockers who scored three points each Tuesday night. They are Ucap president Butch Macasaet (BJ Greenwood), *sabong* idol Patrick Antonio (Sagupaan Hammer), 2001 Cavite International derby champ Pol Estrellado (PE San Pablo Hammer) and Benjie Lim (Hammer Jr.).

Macasaet's BJ Greenwood I posted 2.5 points. Those with two victories were lawyer Rudy Salud and Lito Orillaza (Winning Time Jobo), Boy de Roca (BL Jojit 128), Biboy Enriquez (Firebird MB), Mauro Prieto (Anito MB), Araneta Int'l. Jan. 21 (Gov. Ito Ynares), Alex Tang (Guts and Glory), Danding Cojuangco (Bumble Bee Balbina), Vic Yu (Sir Vincent), Raymond Velayo (Arnis Master) and Sonny Lagon (San Lorenzo Blue Blade).

ATENEO teammates Christian "Ayo" Canlas (third from left) and Daniel Luis Macalino emerged as Gold Medalists in the DECS-NCR Palaro 2001 Elementary Tennis Lawn tournament for Boys held last Dec. 3 to 7 at the BNP Tennis Club, Las Piñas City. Also in photo is the QC-Ateneo coach, Ronaldo de Guzman (center).

New commissioner sworn in

LAWYER Emmanuel B. Palabrica was sworn in recently by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as commissioner of the Games and Amusements Board. The oathtaking was witnessed by the inductee's wife lawyer Marujita S. Palabrica, their only child, 11-year-old and Southridge student Jose Enrico, sister Dr. Marilou P. Castello and Edgar and Arlene Aguas.

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

BASKETBALL: US NCAA - Kansas vs Princeton at 1 p.m., Iowa State vs Boston College at midnight (r) on ESPN

NBA – Toronto Raptors vs San Antonio Spurs at 10 p.m. on NBN 4

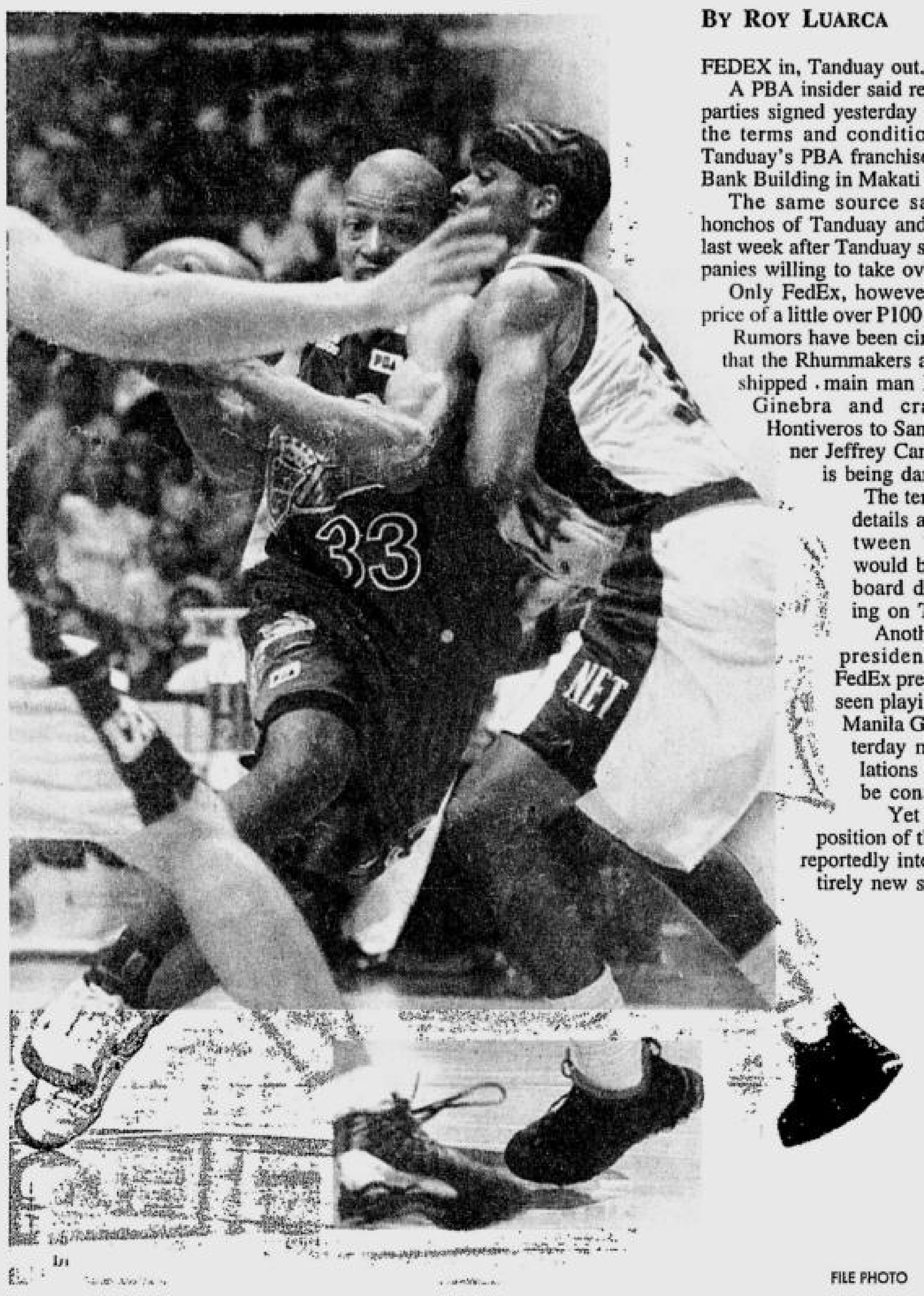
POOL: World Pool League 2001 at 12 noon (r – 8:30 p.m.) on ESPN

TENNIS: Masters Series (Paris) Highlights at 11 a.m. and 9 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

GOLF: Holden Australian Open Golf Championship, Day Four at 2 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

TERM SHEET SIGNED

FedEx gets Tanduay franchise



FILE PHOTO

SAN Miguel Beer's Lamont Strothers (left) drives against Sta. Lucia Realty's Damien Owens.

BY ROY LUARCA

FEDEX in, Tanduay out.

A PBA insider said representatives of the two parties signed yesterday the term sheet detailing the terms and conditions for the transfer of Tanduay's PBA franchise to FedEx at the Allied Bank Building in Makati City.

The same source said talks between top honchos of Tanduay and FedEx actually started last week after Tanduay shopped around for companies willing to take over its franchise.

Only FedEx, however, agreed to the selling price of a little over P100 million.

Rumors have been circulating since last week that the Rhummakers are up for sale after they shipped main man Eric Menk to Barangay Ginebra and crack shooter Dondon Hontiveros to San Miguel Beer. Top gunner Jeffrey Cariaso, on the other hand, is being dangled as a trade bait.

The term sheet, which contains details and terms of the sale between Tanduay and FedEx, would be presented to the PBA board during its general meeting on Tuesday for approval.

Another source said Tanduay president Wilson Young and FedEx president Lito Alvarez were seen playing a round of golf at the Manila Golf & Country Club yesterday morning, fuelling speculations that the deal is about to be consummated.

Yet to be tackled is the composition of the FedEx team, which is reportedly intent on putting up an entirely new squad with players coming mainly from the Metropolitan Basketball Association, where it fielded the FedEx Laguna Lakers this year.

Based on past experiences, a new PBA franchise is usually allowed to bring in at least five players through direct recruitment.

If this rule would be applied, then FedEx is likely to elevate some Lakers, specially Fil-Ams Chris Clay and Jeffrey Flowers.

Other players likely to be considered for inclusion are members of the Philippine team which retained the Southeast Asian Basketball Association men's championship in Manila and the Southeast Asian Games men's basketball title in Kuala Lumpur.

Tanduay also owns the right to the No. 1 pick in this year's draft after winning over Pop Cola and Purefoods in the drawing of lots among the lowest ranked teams this season.

Derek Pumaren's retention as head coach is being considered though other coaches are being eyed as replacements.

Under the term sheet, FedEx will assume the existing contracts of players and coaching staff, though it's likely that the FedEx management would opt for buyouts.

The insider added that the relationship between FedEx, through its sole licensee Airfreight 2100 Inc., and Tanduay, a member of the Lucio Tan Group of Companies (LTGC), extends to business. LTGC is going to tap the worldwide service networks of FedEx while Airfreight 2100 Inc./FedEx would be able to capture a huge chunk of the logistical business requirements of LTGC. Airfreight 2001 Inc., headed by Bert Lina, handles 100 percent of FedEx's pick-up and delivery operations in the Philippines.

With its entry to the PBA, FedEx may file for a leave of absence in the MBA, the same source said.

Olivarez cagers win

GAMES TODAY (PMI Gym)
8 a.m.—SBC vs EAC (juniors)
11 a.m.—RTU vs CDSL (juniors)
12:30 p.m.—PMI vs New Era (seniors)
2 p.m.—NCBA vs PUP (seniors)
3:30 p.m.—Lyceum vs SBC (seniors)
5 p.m.—DLSU-M vs Feati (seniors)

OLIVAREZ College survived the indefinite suspension of Melvin Sto. Domingo to beat AMA Computer College, 80-64, while PATTS and RTU made the race tighter for Group B quarterfinals slots with contrasting wins yesterday in the National Capital Region Athletic Association (NCRAA) basketball tournament at the Lyceum gym.

Olivarez leaned on Bobby Barnson to improve to 3-4 in Group B, where Lyceum (5-0), DLSU-M (5-0), PUP (4-1) and Emilio Aguinaldo are also contesting the four quarterfinal berths.

AMA dropped to 2-4 in this tournament supported by Pagcor, Pepsi-Cola, Splash, Mikasa and the Department of Agrarian Reform.

PATTS turned back New Era University, 61-59, for a 3-3 slate as their victims fell to 1-4. RTU shared PATTS' record with an 89-59 triumph over University of Asia and the Pacific (0-6).

SMB routs Sta. Lucia, ties series

Game Tomorrow (Araneta Coliseum)
7 p.m.—San Miguel vs Sta. Lucia

BY JUNE NAVARRO

SAN Miguel Beer dazzled Sta. Lucia Realty with its torrid outside shooting and excellent ball movement to post a ghastly 106-73 rout and level their PBA Governors Cup Finals series at 2-2 last night at the Philsports Arena.

Lamont Strothers poured 18 of his game-high 38 points in the second quarter and went 4 out of 4 from the three-point range as the Beermen built what looked like an insurmountable 58-35 spread at halftime.

Swingman Danny Seigle, Nic Belasco and Boybits Victoria aided Strothers in the early breakaway, draining huge baskets and unselfishly making their teammates feel good on the floor.

San Miguel's winning margin was the second most lopsided victory in PBA Finals history. The first was during Alaska's 99-61 rout of the Beermen in Game 6 of the 1998 All Filipino Finals.

Interestingly, it was also Sta. Lucia's second worst loss after an 86-52 debacle against the same squad in the All-Filipino eliminations last year.

Left dumbfounded and unable to react, the Realtors found themselves in a deeper pit than they had expected as they failed to contain the Beermen from the perimeter while missing most of their long-range attempts on the other side of the floor.

As the Beermen shifted their blinding assault to high gear in the third period, the one-sided affair worsened due to Sta. Lucia's refusal to continue waging a battle.

Through the persuasions of Strothers, Seigle and Belasco, the Beermen constructed an almost indestructible cushion, 69-38, midway in the third quarter.

When the final period entered, the Realtors, sensing that no amount of tenacity could undo San Miguel's ire, just allowed themselves to be sucked in the flow of things and looked forward to tomorrow's Game 5.

The Beermen went 10 out of 14 from trifecta territory and shot 56 percent from the floor in the first half as compared to the Realtors' 44 percent output.

The Scores:

SAN MIGUEL 106--Strothers 38, Lago 14, Seigle 12, Belasco 10, Victoria 9, Ildefonso 8, Racela 7, Pena 4, Duat 4, Gamboa 0.

STA. LUCIA 73--Owens 20, Falcasantos 14, Aquino 10, Espino 10, David 6, Francisco 5, Adriano 3, Del Rosario 2, Orquillas 0, Belano 1, Tan 0, Mendoza 0, Ortiguerra 0.

RP tennis coach quits

BY MARC ANTHONY REYES

JOSEPH Lizardo, a long-time national tennis player and coach, resigned from the national coaching staff last Tuesday after being bypassed as Philippine team mentor to the Davis Cup next year.

Though Lizardo maintained that it has nothing to do with the decision of the Philippine Tennis Association to replace him as Davis Cup coach, the former No. 1 player in the country said he just wanted to "have a break from tennis for a while."

The Philta last week named 65-year-old Johnny Jose as replacement of Lizardo, the country's Davis Cup coach last year. He managed to elevate the RP team from Group III to Group II category after leading the country over Tajikistan, 2-1, early this year.

Some Philta officials, who refused to be named, questioned Philta's move because it practically made Jose a one-man coaching army because he is also the coach of the women's team as well as the boys' and girls' teams.

Jose, the last RP player to have won an Asian Games gold way back in the '60s, coached the women's team during the ITF Fed Cup and the boys' and girls' teams in several tournaments held in Thailand and Malaysia.

Philta president Buddy Andrada said he's saddened by Lizardo's resignation and tried his best to convince the coach to stay. In fact, he claimed they offered Lizardo to be the team captain but he turned it down.

Meanwhile, RP Davis Cuppers Johnny Arcilla, Joseph Victorino, Michael Mora and Adelo Abadia are reportedly upset over the Philta's decision to include a Fil-American in the lineup when the country goes against Kazakhstan in Group II competitions this February.

The plan is to put the four regular members in elimination matches to determine whose slot will be given to 20-year-old Fil-Am John Steward which, Andrada claimed, expressed interest in playing for the country.

Arevalo bags 3 net titles

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD Czarina Mae Arevalo won two singles and one doubles titles in the International Tennis Federation (ITF) Junior Circuit in Thailand and Vietnam last week.

In Thailand, the second-seeded Arevalo won the singles title over unranked Vietnamese Huyn Mei-Huyn, 6-4, 6-3. She teamed up with German Sarah Raab to reach the finals but lost to top seeds Kao Shao-Yuan of the United States and Wang Ting-Wen of Chinese Taipei, 4-6, 6-4, 3-6.

In Vietnam, the top-ranked Arevalo defeated unseeded American Amber Janjua, 6-3, 6-3, for the singles title. The No. 1 Arevalo and Kao Shao-Yuan bagged the doubles plum over fourth seeds Tran Thi Kim Loi and Huyn, 6-0, 7-6 (2).

Jacobs awaits top guards to join tryout

BY JUNE NAVARRO

NATIONAL coach Ron Jacobs is still waiting for three point guards to join the tryout but stressed that probably only two would be given slots to the Asian Games-bound RP squad.

Jacobs named Sta. Lucia Realty's Paolo Mendoza, Olsen Racela of San Miguel Beer and Pop Cola's Johnny Abarrientos as the three court generals on top of his wish list.

The sweet-shooting Mendoza and the whippet-quick Racela are excused from the tryouts since they are still slugging it out in the ongoing PBA Governors Cup Finals.

Abarrientos, on the other hand, is still nursing an injured knee he incurred during the elimination round.

"Paolo Mendoza is a point guard who can shoot, Racela is a point guard who loves to pass it and Abarrientos is a point guard who likes to penetrate," Jacobs told the INQUIRER after yesterday's tryouts at the Moro Lorenzo Gym inside the sprawling Ateneo campus.

He also mentioned Boyet Fernandez of Purefoods and La Salle's Mike Cortez as among his choices.

"They are all good point guards but I must choose only two and that's gonna be a tough call on my part I think," Jacobs added.

Deeply worried about the tenacious Chinese zone, Jacobs said he would pick the best two who could distribute the ball with dexterity and timing in order to break the zone.

"It's gonna be one of my biggest decisions because I'm very much worried about the zone," he said.

Starting next week, Jacobs would relieve players he is more familiar with to give more exposure to others who are having trouble meeting his criteria.

"I'll excuse the guys I'm comfortable with next week and try to get a closer look at the guys on the border," he said.

Players from San Miguel and Sta. Lucia and others who failed to join the daily scrimmages due to injuries or other pressing matters are invited to come on Jan. 7 next year where Jacobs will start pruning down the list to 24 aspirants.

Jacobs, however, is required to submit a list of 18 PBA players included in the training squad on or before Dec. 22.

MENDOZA

Jaworski: In good political company

JAWORSKI

BY PERCY DELLA

SACRAMENTO, California—It would thrill Robert Jaworski to know that his is not a lone voice in the political wilderness.

True, the erstwhile basketball star may be the only athlete turned member of the current Philippine Senate after fellow cager Freddie Webb. But the fact that an illustrious cast of former sports luminaries now inhabit the US Congress—the world's citadel of democracy—should warm the cockles of Jawo's heart.

Never mind that his political performance or non-performance gives Jaworski critics fodder to mount detractions. Reality bites, but the former Olympian and Ginebra playing coach is legislating and enjoying the collegiality of the most exclusive club in the islands.

His is not a Mr. Smith Goes to Washington saga. He became the Hon. Robert Jaworski, senator of the Philippines by becoming an icon for the poor.

Anyway you slice it and dice it, Jaworski is in good company.

Consider:

There are two former Olympians, one baseball great and three former football heroes in the current US Congress. They are:

- Congressman Jim Ryun, a third team Kansas Democrat who was a world record holder in the 1500 meter run. He won a silver medal in the event in the 1968 Olympics.
- Ben Nighthorse Campbell, the senior US Senator from Colorado. The Sacramento-area born Campbell was captain of the US Olympic judo team to the 1964 Olympics. The son of a Portuguese immigrant and a Cheyenne Indian, Campbell, a Democrat, is the only native American serving in the US Congress.
- Jim Bunning, the Republican senator from Kentucky. A former major league pitcher for the Detroit Tigers and Philadelphia Phillies, Bunning is a member of baseball's Hall of Fame. He was the second pitcher in history (Cy Young was the first) to record 1,000 strikeouts and 100 wins in both the National and American Leagues.
- J.C. Watts, fifth-term Republican representative from Oklahoma. While at the University of Oklahoma, Watts was quarterback for the Sooners, leading them to two consecutive Big Eight Championships and Orange Bowl victories. J.C. was one of only a handful of black quarterbacks during his college years. He graduated from Kansas with a degree in journalism.
- Steve Largent, a fourth term Republican representative, also from Oklahoma, is a Football Hall of Famer. Largent was a pass receiver with the Seattle Seawaks for 14 years. He owned an advertising company prior to entering politics. He has a teaching degree from the University of Tulsa.
- Tom Osborne, former University of Nebraska football coach who is a freshman Republican representative for Nebraska. Osborne coached the Huskers to victory in the Orange Bowl, considered the unofficial college national championships in 1998. Ironically, he now serves with Largent and Watts, whose Oklahoma teams used to beat up on Osborne's Huskers.

Of course three other sports heroes had previously served in the august halls of Congress. They are former NBA stars and Rhode scholars Tom McMillen and Bill Bradley, and former football quarterback Jack Kemp.

Bradley and Kemp mounted unsuccessful runs for the White House. It is no secret that had they been at the right place and the right time, Bradley and Kemp could have been elected presidents.

RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA
BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Ann's Magic 2. Perfect Nine

Race 2—1. Rosewood 2. Counter Strike 3. Velocity

Race 3—1. Dynasouls 2. Jackpot

Race 4—1. Heavy Metal 2. Rainmaker 3. Baptism of Fire 4. Opening Prospect

Race 5—1. Shower of Stars 2. Gold and Dollar 3. Man of the Hour

Race 6—1. Justine's Quest 2. Cara Bambina 3. Brenda Starr 4. Love Triangle 5. Raggedy Belle

Race 7—1. Guguy's Legacy 2. Pinagpala 3. Carlo's Charm 4. Rain Check 5. Imus Emperor

Race 8—1. Dear Elane/Fortius 2. Golden Child 3. Lovely Luigi 4. Hezagonebabes 5. Bravada 6. Bold Freddy

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METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

920 illegal cops guarding Metro

BY ALCUIN PAPA

THERE are some 920 illegal policemen deployed all over Metro Manila.

The Philippine National Police Commission has nullified the designation of these new recruits after it discovered that their assignment as police officers was illegal.

In a two-page memorandum, lawyer Emilio Salumbides, Napolcom director for the National Capital Region, said his office would not recognize the new recruits as legitimate police officers even after they had taken their oath.

The 920 policemen have already taken their oath as police officers 1 (PO1) with the National Capital Regional Police Office (NCRPO) and were in fact already deployed throughout Metro Manila on foot patrol duties.

Salumbides said the commission rejected the list of 920 policemen recommended by the NCRPO Screening Committee for appointments to the PNP because they did not pass the scrutiny of the Napolcom.

The Napolcom is the agency that has the sole authority to evaluate and administer examinations for PNP applicants.

Hence, the new recruits are considered as "illegal entrants," Salumbides explained.

920 ILLEGAL/ A18

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MUSIC WAREHOUSE	MUZIC JIVE RIDGE	BARBIES CRADLE DEC. 14 735.1405/735.1280
TIA MARIA'S, JUPITER ST., MAKATI CITY	PLAYGROUND FLIGHT	RETROSPECT DEC. 27 ☎ 890.4735
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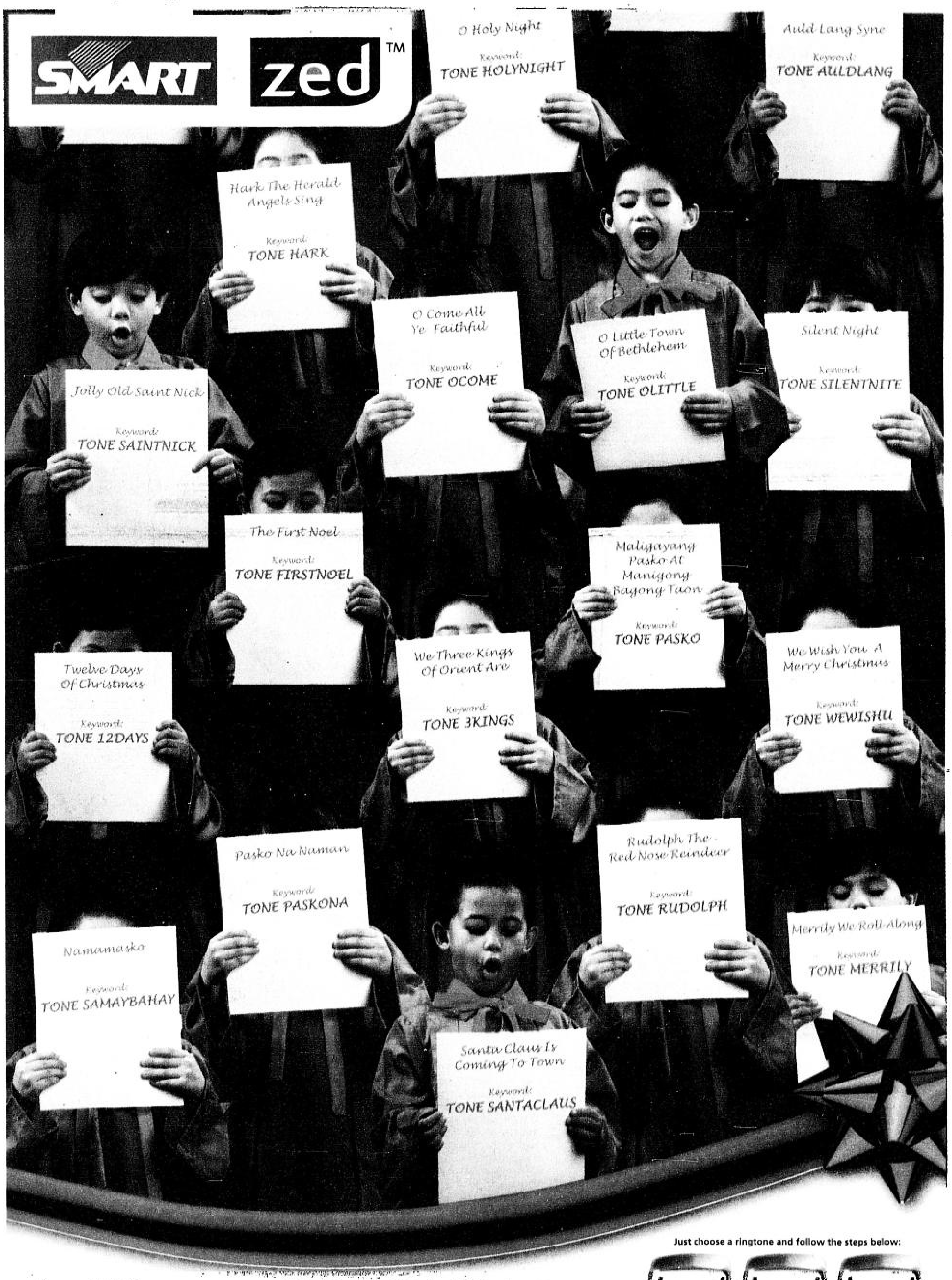

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Useless investigating agency

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

IN THE United States, policemen tremble when they are investigated by their internal affairs office. The internal affairs office polices the police.

We have our own version of an agency that polices the police: the Internal Affairs Service or IAS of the Philippine National Police.

But our IAS is a useless piece of baggage of the PNP. It's an agency within the PNP which is supposedly autonomous. Supposedly, it could investigate even the PNP chief for alleged wrongdoings and recommend his dismissal, if need be.

***

But the IAS is not doing its job of policing the police. It's a scarecrow of an agency.

Investigations conducted by the IAS on complaints against PNP members take a long, long time. Some IAS investigators, I was told, take bribes from respondent-cops. The bribe is in consideration for the dropping of the case against the policemen complained of. Or, it's for making the case drag on for months or years so that the complainant gets tired and stops pursuing the case.

This is probably what's happening to an administrative case filed against SPO4 Cesar Teneros of the Manila City Hall police detachment by a couple, Rodrigo and Lennie Evardone. It's been 10 months since the Evardones filed the case with IAS. But there's no decision yet.

***

In February this year, the Evardones were coming home from work when they chanced upon a taxicab that figured in an accident. The couple got down from the cab they were riding in and tried to help the victim, a woman passenger.

But as Lennie Evardone was trying to help pull out the victim from the ill-fated cab, she saw another woman divesting the victim of her jewelry and wallet.

The woman looter was a girlfriend of Teneros who also happened to be at the accident scene. Teneros, who was not in uniform, just watched as his girlfriend looted the victim.

Lennie made the mistake of confronting the looter. That's when Teneros intervened. He beat up the Evardones and clapped them in jail for "interfering in a police function." To Teneros, "police function" meant robbing an accident victim.

***

What's taking the IAS so long to hear the summary dismissal proceedings against Teneros. If IAS investigators don't know what "summary" means, it's a synonym for quick. Summary also means done without delay.

Baka lang kako mga ignorante kayo diyan sa IAS *at hindi n'yo naiintindihan ang ibig sabihin ng* "summary."

Now that you guys at IAS already know what "summary hearing" means—isn't knowledge beautiful, guys?— perhaps you can come up with the long-overdue decision on the Teneros case.

***

Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson has gone to Malaysia to meet with somebody who would supposedly work for the release of three remaining hostages of the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan. Two of the three are the American missionary couple, Martin and Gracia Burnham.

A captured Abu Sayyaf bandit confessed that an unnamed "private negotiator" was trying to arrange ransom payments for the Burnhams.

Umalis ka diyan sa **negotiations, Ping,** *at pampagulo ka lang* **!**

Besides, people know that you're trying to play the hero so that the public will forget about the accusations that you were involved in kidnapping and drug trafficking when you were still the top cop.

***

And, for the nth time, businessman Lepeng Wee, never went with Lacson to Sabah, Malaysia !

Wee has never left the country. I should know because he and I always keep in touch.

That rumor that Wee was with Lacson in Malaysia was apparently meant to make him an "enemy" of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration.

Wee's detractors should come up with more convincing brickbats against him.

***

A certain Gilbert Tilongo of Naval Intelligence has allegedly been extorting money from small traders at the Ozamiz City wharf.

Is this part of his job as intelligence agent ?

In Tacloban City, a certain police Superintendent Mahinay is not slow to move as his name implies. He is allegedly quick in ordering his men to extort from small traders who claim their cargo at the Tacloban City pier.

Mahinay's men inspect domestic cargoes at the pier in the guise of looking for firecrackers. They require the traders to present all sorts of documents in order to delay the release of the goods. As a result, traders come across so they won't be bothered by Mahinay's men.

***

Who's the biggest gambling lord in the country, who's even bigger than Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda?

Answer: Tony Santos of Marikina.

Santos operates the illegal *jueteng* in Rizal, Laguna, Cavite and Metro Manila, according to my sources at the Department of Interior and Local Government.

The DILG sources said that Santos gives tens of millions in bribe money every month to local and police officials in the above-mentioned places.

Tony Santos, the DILG sources said, has a corrupting influence on some local officials and police officers in Rizal, Laguna, Cavite and Metro Manila.

***

A drama series titled "Droga" will soon be on television.

The television series will expose the evils of drugs and the illegal drug trade through true-to-life stories.

The TV show will be hosted by Mary Ong, a.k.a. Rosebud, as the narrator. Rosebud blew the whistle on Panfilo Lacson and his minions in the drug trade.

Goons doing a 'Sayyaf' in the heart of Manila

By Philip C. Tubeza

WHILE Abu Sayyaf terrorists continue kidnapping foreign missionaries in the south, petty criminals are preying on foreign tourists right in the heart of Manila.

Local tourism took another beating after Swedish tourist Robert Erik Eriksson, 43, lost more than $4,000 to members of the notorious Ativan gang after playing golf in Intramuros.

He became the third tourist to fall victim to criminals in Manila in four days. And the suspects even beat up Eriksson when he prematurely woke up after the culprits had drugged him to sleep.

Eriksson, billeted at the City State Tower Hotel in Ermita, told the Western Police District (WPD) General Assignments Section (GAS) that he lost $4,400 to two unidentified Ativan gang members.

The victim described the first suspect as "decent-looking," around 60-years-old, medium built, fluent in English, and 5'9" in height. The second suspect was twentyish, slim, fair-complexioned, sporting short hair, and was driving a white Toyota car.

Eriksson added that he lost a wristwatch worth $4,000, a gold necklace worth $400, P2,500 in cash, a T-shirt worth $40, and a pair of pants worth $25.

He said the incident happened around 3 p.m. on Dec. 7 near the Intramuros Golf Course.

He said he had just finished playing golf and was waiting for a taxi when one of the two suspects approached and befriended him.

The culprit, "who was glib," then offered Eriksson a ride back to his hotel. While they were on their way to City State Tower, the suspects offered him some juice drink.

After taking a sip, Eriksson said he felt dizzy and passed out. When he woke up, he was surprised to see that he was already near a police station in Carmona, Cavite.

The victim, who had bruises in his body, later told policemen that he woke up while he was still inside the suspects' car.

He said that he sensed that something was wrong and tried to fight off the two suspects.

But the culprits ganged up on him and beat him up until he again passed out.

On Saturday, Indian tourist and businessman Yogesh Marhawa, 36, lost nearly P200,000 to the Ativan gang.

One of the suspects befriended Marhawa, pretending to be a CitiBank vice president, while he was walking also in Intramuros.

On Monday night, American tourist John Walter Pennel II, lost more than $2,000 to two snatchers, who at first offered him to have "threesome sex" with them.

So who wants Ador Mawanay?

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHERE to Ka Ador?

ONE by one, Angelo "Ador" Mawanay is losing his friends.

More than a week after getting slammed by his former handler, Fr. Carmelo Caluag, Mawanay was yesterday disowned by the family of missing casino employee Egdar Bentain.

"We don't trust him anymore. We're sick and tired of him," Bentain's brother Edcel told the Inquirer.

Mawanay was partly to blame for the "blundered" investigation on Bentain's disappearance, Edcel said.

Since he surfaced a few months ago, Mawanay has yet to present any evidence proving that Bentain was indeed kidnapped and killed by agents of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force led by Senior Supts. Cesar Mancao and Michael Ray Aquino, according to Edcel.

Mawanay, said to be an ex-civilian agent of the Paoctf, had claimed that he personally witnessed how Bentain was stuffed into a steel drum and buried alive near a bridge in Bacolor, Pampanga.

Edcel said Mawanay's revelation back then brought hope to his family and confirmed nagging suspicions that Bentain was killed for releasing in 1998 a videotape showing Joseph Estrada, then a presidential candidate, playing bacarrat in a hotel casino.

"Now the investigation is not going anywhere. He can't present any evidence so what would happen to his allegations?"

Caluag, who provided a safe house to Mawanay when he first came out in the open, had criticized Mawanay for not presenting any proof to back his allegations that Sen. Panfilo Lacson was involved in high crimes, according to a source close to the priest.

Caluag was dismayed that Mawanay and his lawyer Argee Guevarra had resorted to getting media mileage instead of looking for evidence, the source said.

Early this month, Mawanay supposedly severed his ties with military intelligence chief Col. Victor Corpus and left the custody of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Mawanay drew the ire of Corpus for supposedly continuing his "swindling" activities in his quarters at the Isafp compound at Camp Crame.

"He blew it. He should not have fooled and gone against his supporters," Edcel said of Mawanay.

GREAT LOAD. Firmness and balance this man transporting a cavan of rice on a bike along Padre Faura has a lot of. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Beltran denounces labor secretary

BAYAN MUNA Representative Crispin Beltran yesterday hit Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas for allegedly discriminating against union members when she decided to give a bigger "extra Christmas bonus" to management level personnel.

Beltran, who also chairs the militant labor group Kilusang Mayo Uno, said members of the DOLE Employees Union furnished his office a copy of Sto. Tomas' administrative order 287, which detailed the bonuses to be given to DOLE employees.

The labor chief, according to the union report, has decided to give a higher Christmas bonus of P5,000 to employees who are non-union members while rank-and-file employees will only receive P2,000.

"Sto. Tomas' performance as labor chief ranks her among the worst in the history of the institution," Beltran said. "In her first few months in office alone, she has issued countless assumption of jurisdiction orders against labor disputes, favoring employers."

Although an additional P3,000 was later distributed, union members claimed this was actually part of the P6,000 signing bonus the employees should have received last year upon finalizing the collective negotiation agreement between union and management. *Agnes Donato*

Chinese falls in drug bust

ANTI-NARCOTICS police arrested a Chinese man in a P3-million drug operation in front of a condominium in San Juan before dawn Monday.

Members of the Philippine National Police Narcotics Group arrested Cheng Yow Chen, 24, in front of Le Gran Condominium, but failed to capture his main supplier, identified as Andy Co, in a follow-up raid hours later.

Police believed Co escaped while they were securing a search warrant from the Manila regional trial court. They are now verifying with the immigration bureau if Co is an overstaying alien.

NarcGroup Director Efren Fernandez said Co is among the most elusive suppliers of drugs in the country and had been the object of police drug operations in Manila.

Fernandez said Cheng was arrested after he allegedly handed over 500 grams of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) to an undercover lawman at the condominium in Barangay Greenhills about 3 a.m. *TJ Burgonio*

920 illegal cops . . .

(From page A17)

Bernardo Calibo, personnel and administrative director of the Napolcom, bared that the Napolcom was not informed when the NCRPO administered the oath of service to the 920 policemen in Camp Crame in the last week of November.

He added the policemen did not even take the written examinations given by the Napolcom and that the new recruits were only able to take the Civil Service Commission exams.

Calibo declared that the Napolcom has administrative and supervisory control over the PNP.

"The Napolcom is not a rubber stamp of the PNP because it is above the PNP. We police the PNP. They should not take things for granted," he said.

Once recalled, the new recruits will undergo rigorous retraining and will be given examinations by the Napolcom, Calibo said.

He added that the Napolcom will not in anyway honor the legitimacy of the policemen's entry into the PNP.

"We don't want a repeat of instances where we discovered in the ranks several policemen who actually have pending criminal cases. We want to avoid the admission of police applicants based on the whims of high-ranking officials," Calibo said.

NBI wants Chua killer extradited

By Philip C. Tubeza

NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco said the bureau would ask US law enforcement agencies to extradite back to the country the suspect in the killing of University of Santo Tomas student Mark Welson Chua.

Wycoco said Michael Von Rainard Manangbao, who fled to the United States early October, can be brought back to the country once a court issues an arrest warrant against the suspect.

Wycoco said Manangbao's father, Cabanatuan police chief Ruel Manangbao, is also in hot water for violating the PNP code of ethics when he reneged on his alleged promise not to let his son escape.

"He (the younger Manangbao) still has freedom to travel since there is no warrant or hold departure order against him," Wycoco said. "But once an arrest warrant is issued, we will ask our counterparts in the US to extradite him."

Immigration authorities confirmed Manangbao left the country on board a Philippine Airlines flight bound for Los Angeles on Oct. 5. It was only on Nov. 23 that the suspect was put in the Bureau of Immigration's watch list of those leaving the country.

Manangbao is one of six suspects in the slaying of Chua, a UST Reserve Officer's Training Corps, in March. The Department of Justice ordered the reopening of preliminary investigation of the case after two witnesses surfaced and claimed they saw Chua's body taken out of the UST ROTC office on the night of March 15.

The next day, Chua's body was found floating in the Pasig River. An NBI investigator said the two witnesses also saw the suspects dump the body in the river.

Wycoco said the elder Manangbao is also in trouble for reneging on his promise, which he allegedly made in the presence of PNP Deputy Director Hermogenes Ebdane.

"It's really up to Mark's father to file a complaint (against Manangbao) for violating the PNP code of ethical and professional standards; especially if Gen. Ebdane was a witness," Wycoco said.

He said the victim's father, Welson Chua, can file the complaint with national police chief Director General Leandro Mendoza or with the National Police Commission.

Cop couldn't believe what he saw of cult leader

By Christian V. Esguerra

A SUSPECTED leader of the dreaded "Tadtad" cult of Mindanao was dead-sure amulets and mystical stones could shield him from bullets. He was wrong.

Juanito Libumfacil, 68, ended up dead after he was shot by two motorcycle-riding gunmen around 11 a.m. on CAA Road, Las Piñas on Monday, PO1 Teoson Rosarito reported yesterday.

The amulet wearer also lost P500,00 during the robbery-slay.

Libumfacil, a former overseas Filipino worker and a resident of Puting Bato in General Santos City, had just withdrawn P500,000 from a bank when the robbers blocked his tricycle and forcibly took his shoulder bag containing the money, police said.

Firmly believing that gunshots would not harm him, Libumfacil put up a bold fight, police said.

The gunmen shot him three times. Two of the bullets pierced through his abdomen while the third one surprisingly failed to penetrate his skin, police claimed.

Police later found pieces of paper, with eerie words, symbols and several splinters of wood festooned on the victim's waist.

A relative of the victim said Libumfacil used charms and several other tattoo marks to keep himself from harm.

Case investigator Rosarito said the victim's body initially appeared to be that of a young man, the smooth skin and all, at the Las Piñas Doctor's Hospital.

When the policeman next went to a doctor to ascertain Libumfacil's age, he was told the victim was 68.

When he went back to see Libumfacil, Rosarito said he got the shock of his life when the body suddenly turned dark with wrinkles all over it.

CHEERS

Dependents feted

THE LOVED Flock El Salvador Catholic Charismatic Ministry (Starfishers), the leadership of the charismatic community of Cavinti, Laguna and Mandaluyong City, celebrated its prayer meeting and Christmas Party on Dec. 11 at the DRC Gym at PNP Narcotics Group, Drug Rehabilitation Center, Camp Bagong Diwa, Bicutan, Taguig City. It was a very successful affair with about 1,400 drug dependents, including a number of street children, participating in the prayer meeting and enjoying the plentiful food and drinks donated by a number of donors. Loved Flock is thanking officers and members of the PNP Narcotics Group and numerous donors who made the celebration a success.

JEERS

Rustom robbed

ACTOR Rustom Padilla's car was robbed by still unidentified men while it was parked in front of East and West Bank on Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Complex, Pasig City. While having a snack about 2 a.m. on Tuesday at Chef and Brewer Restaurant at the ground floor of AIC Gold Tower, Rustom said he was notified by the building security guard that his car was opened. When he checked, the actor said his bag containing his bank book, cash and other valuables were all gone. He estimated the loss at P60,000. Padilla denounced the building security for failing in their duty, stating that the area where he had parked his car was well lighted. Padilla also decried what he called the failure of the management of Chef and Brewer Restaurant to protect its customers.

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6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
8	MUSKETEER

SM CENTERPOINT 7149522-7161418

1	MVP
2	THE SCORE
3	SUMMER CATCH
4	EARTHQUAKE
5	HARRY POTTER
6	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
7	MUSKETEER
8	MONSTERS, INC
9	ROCKSTAR
10	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 9358749

1	MVP
2	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
3	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
4	HARRY POTTER
5	MUSKETEER
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	SUMMER CATCH
8	ROCKSTAR
9	EARTHQUAKE
10	SUTLA (RI)
11	THE SCORE
12	MARKOVA (RI)

SM CITY MANILA 5238240

1	MONSTERS, INC.
2	MUSKETEER
3	MVP
4	SUMMER CATCH
5	ROCKSTAR
6	HARRY POTTER
7	SUTLA (RI)
8	THE SCORE
9	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
10	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
11	EARTHQUAKE
12	MARKOVA (RI)

SM MEGAMALL 6331901 • 6329401

1	DREAM GIRL
2	MONSTERS, INC.
3	HARRY POTTER
4	SUMMER CATCH
5	MVP
6	THE SCORE
7	SUTLA (RI)
8	EARTHQUAKE
9	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
10	MUSKETEER
11	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
12	MARKOVA (RI)

SM TUTUBAN 2514302

1	SUMMER CATCH
2	MVP
3	EARTHQUAKE
4	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT

DIGITAL dts SOUND

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1	MARKOVA (RI)
2	MUSKETEER
3	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	EARTHQUAKE
6	HARRY POTTER
7	SUMMER CATCH
8	MVP
9	SUTLA (RI)
10	THE SCORE
11	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
12	MONSTERS, INC.

SM SOUTHMALL 8056088

1	EARTHQUAKE
2	THE SCORE
3	HARRY POTTER
4	MVP
5	DREAM GIRL
6	ROCKSTAR
7	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
8	SUMMER CATCH
9	MUSKETEER
10	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT

SM GUADALUPE COMM'L 8838905

1	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
2	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
3	EARTHQUAKE

SM CEBU 2313876

1	HARRY POTTER
2	KAPITAN AMBO
3	JEEPERS CREEPERS
4	GLITTER
5	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
6	THE SCORE
7	JOY RIDE

SM ILOILO 3209422

1	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
2	CLOSED
3	HARRY POTTER
4	JEEPERS CREEPERS
5	THE SCORE
6	JOY RIDE
7	CLOSED
8	GLITTER

SM PAMPANGA 7128015

1	HARRY POTTER
2	JOY RIDE
3	MUSKETEER
4	KING OF GLADIATORS
5	TIKIM
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

SM SUCAT 8294935

1	MVP
2	SUMMER CATCH
3	HARRY POTTER
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

SM DAVAO

1	JEEPERS CREEPERS
2	HARRY POTTER
3	IRON LADIES
4	BUBBLE BOY
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3	HARRY POTTER	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	THE MUSKETEER	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GLORIETTA 4

1	MONSTERS, INC.	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	THE SCORE	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	SUMMER CATCH THX	In DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	CINEMANILA	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	MVP: MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6	HARRY POTTER	In DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7	ROCKSTAR	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

Art Film

GREENBELT

1	CINEMANILA	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	SUMMER CATCH	In SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
3	CINEMANILA	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	REGINE AT THE MOVIES DEC. 15, 16, 21, 22, 28, 29, 30 Onstage	

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1	SUMMER CATCH THX	In DSD/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
2	MVP: MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	THE SCORE	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	MONSTERS, INC.	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	HARRY POTTER	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

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MOVIE GUIDE
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Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA (Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (COS)	MVP
2 (SDDS)	MONSTER, INC.
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4 GOLD (DTS)	ROCKSTAR
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	THE SCORE
6 GOLD (SDDS)	SUMMER CATCH
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	MUSKETEER
8	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
9	EARTHQUAKE
10	SERENDIPITY

Pearl Plaza Cinemas (Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	
2	
3 (DTS)	DREAM GIRL
4	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
5	
6 (DTS)	
Golden Pearl THX	

Masagana CINEMA (Pasay) tel 831.6603

1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
3	TALONG

starmall Movies (Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
3	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MUSKETEER
5	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

METROPOLIS star 543.3927 loc. 150

1	EARTHQUAKE
2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
3	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	HARRY POTTER
6	SUMMER CATCH
7	RESERVE
8	RESERVE

PREMIERE CINEMA THX (Makati City) tel 751.2011 to13

1	SUMMER CATCH

Center Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	HARRY POTTER

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC. tel 930.9515

1	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3	REPLICANT

Spring (Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
A	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

Sunshine (FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	ARAYYY
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	
4	

GOTESCO CINEMA

City (Manila) tel 734.6588

1 (DOLBY)	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
2	
3	
4	MUSKETEER
5	EARTHQUAKE
6	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
7 (DTS)	MVP
8 (SDDS)	SUMMER CATCH
9 (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER

Caloocan tel 362.3508

2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

Grand Central (Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
3	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
4 (SDDS)	SUMMER CATCH
5	MUSKETEER
6 (DOLBY)	EARTHQUAKE
7 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
8	TIKIM
9	RESERVE

Commonwealth tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	SUMMER CATCH
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
4	EARTHQUAKE
5 (SDDS)	MVP
6	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
7 (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER
8	SUTLA

Ortigas tel 696.6795

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
5 (SDDS)	MVP

Universal (Manila) tel 733.2470

1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT

Sampaguita (Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT

Dilson (Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson
Lords
Jennet

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	OPENS DEC. 25, 2001
2	OPENS DEC. 25, 2001
3	OPENS DEC. 25, 2001

Prima (Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto SUPER CINERAMA tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3	RESERVE
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE

New Divisoria Mall DIVISORIA CINEMA tel 244.4619

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6	TALONG

Baclaran LRT LRT CINEMA tel 512.0115

1 (DOLBY)	
2	

Berma tel 079.2029

1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

CitiMall (Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
2	SUMMER CATCH

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall (Sta. Rosa Laguna) tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	ROCKSTAR
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	DREAM GIRL
2 (DTS)	ROCKSTAR
3 (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER
4	JOY RIDE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	JEEPERS CREEPERS
2 (DOLBY)	ROCKSTAR
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4	JOY RIDE

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	HARRY POTTER
2	WEYT A MINIT
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MovieTown (Tarlac)

1	KAPITAN AMBO
2	KING OF GLADIATORS
3 (DOLBY)	JOY RIDE
4 (DTS)	MONSTERS, INC

Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	EARTHQUAKE
2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
3	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
4 (DTS)	TALONG

Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	ROCKSTAR
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3 (DTS)	JOY RIDE
4	TALONG
5	KUMAKASA PUMUPUTOK

Olivarez Tri-Cinema (Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	TALONG
2	ROCKSTAR
3	JEEPERS CREEPERS

Olivarez Los Baños tel (049) 249-2558

1	HARRY POTTER
2	ROCKSTAR
3	IRON LADY

Olivarez Tagaytay tel (046) 413.0311

1	KAPITAN AMBO
2	TIKIM
3	THE BODY

Morales Cinema (Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	ROCKSTAR
2	JOY RIDE
3	IRON LADY

Cabuyao (Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	HAYOP SA SEX APPEAL
2 (DTS)	

Emperor (Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	KUMAKASA PUMUPUTOK
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	HARRY POTTER

Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	KAPITAN AMBO
2	JOY RIDE
3	MONSTERS, INC.
4	TIKIM

Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
2	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
3	DON'T SAY A WORD
4 (DTS ES)	KAPITAN AMBO

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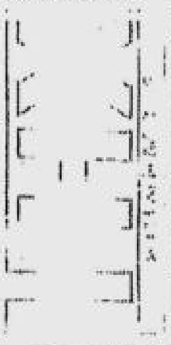
1	HARRY POTTER
2	HARRY POTTER
3	THE SCORE
4	ROCKSTAR
5	DREAMGIRL
6	MONSTER, INC.
7	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
8	MUSKETEER
9	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
10	IRON LADIES



ERMITA 536-7809 TO 12

1	ROCKSTAR
2	HARRY POTTER
3	MONSTERS, INC.
4	THE SCORE
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	DREAM GIRL
7	MUSKETEER

METRO EAST 632-9115-16 / 633-7641

1	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
2	HARRY POTTER
3	THE SCORE
4	IRON LADIES
5	MUSKETEER
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	ROCKSTAR
8	DREAM GIRL

NOVALICHES 935 3229 TO 31

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	DREAM GIRL
4	THE SCORE
5	ROCKSTAR
6	MUSKETEER
7	HARRY POTTER
8	MONSTERS, INC.

IMUS (046) 471-0100

1	HARRY POTTER
2	THE SCORE
3	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
4	MUSKETEER
5	ROCKSTAR
6	DREAM GIRL

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 / 0459

1	HARRY POTTER
2	THE ONE
3	JEEPERS CREEPERS
4	SERENDIPITY
5	MONSTERS, INC.
6	WEYT A MINIT

ILOILO (033) 336-0077 / 0079

1	DON'T SAY A WORD
2	KING OF GLADIATORS
3	HARRY POTTER
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	SOON TO OPEN
6	SOON TO OPEN

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	SUTLA (RE-ISSUE)
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	MUSKETEER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	HARRY POTTER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	EARTHQUAKE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	MVP
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7(DOLBY)	SUMMER CATCH
FARMERS PLAZA-1(DOLBY)	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
FARMERS PLAZA-2(DOLBY)	PISNGI
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	MARITAL RAPE / EROTIC DIARIES
ODEON	EARTHQUAKE
ODEON-2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
ROBEN	PISNGI
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	PUKYUTAN / STORY OF US
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
REMAR	PISNGI
REMAR-2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	DALAWANG PISNGI
B	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
C	SUTLA (RI)
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-2	SUMMER CATCH
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	ROCKSTAR
CINEMA-2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
CINEMA-3	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	THE SCORE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	MONSTER, INC.
CINEMA-6	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
CINEMA-7	SUTLA (RI)
CINEMA-8	PISNGI
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SUMMER CATCH
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	EARTHQUAKE
CINEMA-12	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
CINEMA-14	MUSKETEER
CINEMA-15	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	THE MUSKETEER
CINEMA-2	MONSTERS, INC.
CINEMA-3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-4	SUMMER CATCH
CINEMA-5	SERENDIPITY
CINEMA-6	THE SCORE
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PIÑAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

SALCEDO. Distinctive style of singing

Kelly sings at Monk's Dream

UPCOMING sexy soul singer Kelly Grace, who is of Puerto Rican lineage, will perform at Monk's Dream in Jupiter St. Makati at 9 tonight.

Kelly Grace is gifted with a distinctive style of singing. Her rendition of popular hits and jazz pieces makes her different from the rest of the crop.

Kelly will be accompanied by Rene in her concert at Monk's Dream.

Kelly recorded a duet number with Nonoy Zuñiga, "Dakila Ka," which was included in the "Awit Abroad" album. This is a tribute to Overseas Filipino Workers and is distributed in the market by Ivory Records.

Christmas treat

THE LITTLE tots can't wait for Christmas?

Bring them over to Club Manila East for a different kind of Christmas treat with the "Dippity Doo Day," 1 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 16 at the club's Funtasy Lagoon Waterpark.

Kids will enjoy a round of face painting, balloon-forming demo by clowns and special film screening. They will also be given snacks and goodies.

There are prizes at stake for the clown parlor games. Mystery and magic unfold at 5 p.m., Ronald McDonald and some wizards invade the scene with their exciting tricks with cards, flowers and lovable bunnies.

Admission is free for Enterprise members. Corporate members enjoy a 75-percent discount, while guests get a 50 percent discount on entrance tickets.

Club Manila East's Christmas "Dip-pity Doo Day" is made possible by McDonald's, Coca Cola, Smart Communications and Joey@92.3-FM.

For more information, call up 660-2805 or 660-2801 to 04.

Weekend parties

THE PARTYING season has started and more great fun and entertainment await gimmick lovers, as the Mild Seven Bar tour continues to invade the trendiest entertainment hubs in Quezon City this weekend.

On Friday, the team will go to Blue Onion, Bargo, Chicago Road House, Macau, Katips, Giligans, WhistleStop, Famous Mikes, Pier One, Padi's Point and Mazo.

On Saturday, the team will head for the other side of the strip as they get ready to mingle with the party crowd of Congo Grille, Ten Years After, East Saint Louis, Humidor, Cafea, WhistleStop, Southern Bulls, Big Shots and Quattro.

ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Digital features showcased at Cinemanila filmfest

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

OF particular interest in the current Cinemanila filmfest is its digital showcase, a preview of our film future. Digital feature films are still on experimental mode locally, but its advantages practically assure their becoming mainstream practice within the next decade.

Filmmakers like the digital process because it's less expensive, more portable and doesn't need a big studio support system. In fact some of our best filmmakers are going into it, and some of them are even buying their own equipment.

This will free filmmaking from big producers who tend to focus only on the profit motive, and are thus too cautious when it comes to making movies about innovative, non-formulaic and controversial topics.

If directors become producers as well via the digital mode of making movies, this will be a major liberating development that should have a particular strong impact in this country, where the bulk of the movie audience is made up of young people.

The youth is supposed to dote on freshness and unconventional ways of doing things, so it should support digital filmmaking in a big way.

On view at Cinemanila are these digital features:

Star Cinema's "Angels": Jonathan (**Angelo Caangay**) has blind parents—Angie (**Gina Alajar**) and Rudy (**Noni Buencamino**). The boy serves as a guide to his parents, who are masseurs. To add to his woes, his sister, Cherrylou (**Weena Basco**) is mentally incapacitated. Worse, a government agency tries to take the children away from their blind parents.

The film is based on a true story and is directed by **Ellen Ongkeko Marfil**. Other performers include **Sylvia Sanchez** and **Jhoan Tan**.

"Bilanggo sa Dilim" is a 1986 movie by acclaimed filmmaker **Mike de Leon** that has not been shown commercially. Produced by **David S. Lim** of Solid House, it's about a photographer (**Joel Torre**) who is obsessed with a model (Cherie Gil) whom he stalks, kidnaps and holds hostage.

His intensity scares her and she decides to flee—until he professes his love for her. She agrees to stay with him for two weeks, and learns about his obsession with another woman in the past. She discovers the truth about his psyche, and does the one thing that will liberate both of them from their past.

Star Cinema's "I.D." has **Ricky Davao** playing Rodel, a principled but troubled man who decides to work abroad to improve his family's lot. While fixing his papers, however, he is tagged as the primary suspect in a murder.

After he's cleared, he hunts down the actual killer, to completely clear his name, meeting three other Rodels in the process. Realizing that revenge is not the answer, he confronts his own problems, instead. **Gil Portes** directs, and **Glydel Mercado, Ronnie Lazaro, Richard Quan**, and **Roy Alvarez** complete the cast.

In "Karga Mano," produced by Dulaang Talyer and directed by **Nicholas Pichay**, Mark is a lawyer visited by creatures that are not quite human. He, a fashion designer and his wife meet on separate occasions and their lives are changed by these encounters.

In "Still Lives," the camera does not move, but the characters do. **Jon Red**'s film takes us inside the world of drugs and crime through the story of Enteng on his last day with a gang of drug traffickers. With **Ray Ventura, Joel Torre, Noni Buencamino, Allan Paule** and **Ynez Veneracion.**

Finally, "Taxi ni Piolo," produced by Star Cinema and directed by **Milo Paz**, is about a cab driver whose job is to ferry the dead to a halfway station before the journey to the afterlife. He still regrets that he has not pursued the greatest love of his life, Galina.

One night, however, he decides to do exactly that—but he has to accomplish it before sunrise. He proceeds to involve himself in the unfinished business of his passengers—not knowing that this will be the catalyst for his own closure.

Bojo Molina cleans up his act, Pops turns a year older

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

IT'S true what they say that you have to get lost first for you to find your way. Ask **Bojo Molina**. For the longest time, he tried to seek meaning in meaningless relationships. Love was just a game to him and any girl would just happen to win by default. Not anymore.

Bojo has finally found the love of his life. He happens to be one of my closest friends in the biz, and I can vouch for the fact that he has indeed made a 360-degree change. Never have I seen him so smitten with one woman. I got a chance to spend time with Bojo and his charming girlfriend Ann for five days straight in Roxas City and Boracay. (I'm saving the stories about our trip for my next column)

"When I met Ann, something just hit me to end all my casual flings," Bojo admits. "When you're really decided to clean up your act it becomes easy. I know in my heart that she's the one I want to grow old with. We will do everything together!"

It's not hard to see why Bojo has decided to really commit to Ann. She gives him a sense of equilibrium. "Ann takes care of me even when I'm not aware of it. One day I just told her out of the blue that I love *sinigang* and cheesecake. The next day she made me some!"

Bojo also considers Ann as his lucky charm "Since we've been together, offers have been pouring in," he says.

I must say that Bojo is one of our few young actors who can really host, sing, dance and act. Others are faking talent, using their good looks or deceptive packaging to reach star status. Bojo may be underrated at this point, but that's better than being overrated.

No doubt his time will come too. Besides he is in no hurry! Why be preoccupied with getting ahead when you can enjoy where you are right now? And Bojo is definitely living it up. What with his very successful Friends Bar (in St Francis Square, which celebrated its 5th anniversary last Sunday), booming career and most of all his rosy love life! I'll be cheering for you all the way, Bro. Boj!

Happy birthday, Pops!

TOO bad I missed the birthday show of **Pops Fernandez** at the Music Museum last Thursday because I was in Roxas City with Bojo Molina. We were guests in the "Halaran" fiesta.

It's common knowledge that Pops is almost like a sister to me. So are **Princess** (**Punzalan**) and **Liezl** (**Martinez**). Even if we lose touch with each other sometimes, we are secure with the thought that our bond is too solid for any intrigues to ruin. We give each other enough space to grow, but we will never outgrow our need for each other.

What a growth it's been for Pops! I've known her ever since she started in show biz. A thousand hairstyles ago!

Pops always cringes when she sees her old photos and movies. No doubt this is her most fulfilling birthday. Now she really, really knows where her heart has been and where it's in. It's love and not time that heals all wounds.

I'm sure her show was another rousing success. What sets it apart from all her other concerts is that this time, she no longer sings to lick her wounds. She now shows that even with the scars left by her wounds, she has become happier and more beautiful. Loverless, but not loveless. Happy, happy birthday my dear Pipay! I love you more through all the December 12ths of your life!

Vandolph's once-upon-a-time girl

SINCE the girlfriend of **Vandolph Quizon** died, many people have become even more curious as to how my friend **Guia Avante** (whom Vandolph has a lovechild with) feels. It could have been her! If there's anyone next to Vandolph's girlfriend **Ishi Raquiza** who really knows what it's like to be with Vandolph, it's Guia. Love ain't transferable, though.

The Avantes (Guia's family who considers me as their adopted daughter) and I join Ishi's family in prayer.

Guia and Ishi may not have had the chance to be friends. But for the love of Vandolph, I know that they will both be eternally linked.

For feedback, e-mail wateringhole2000@yahoo.com

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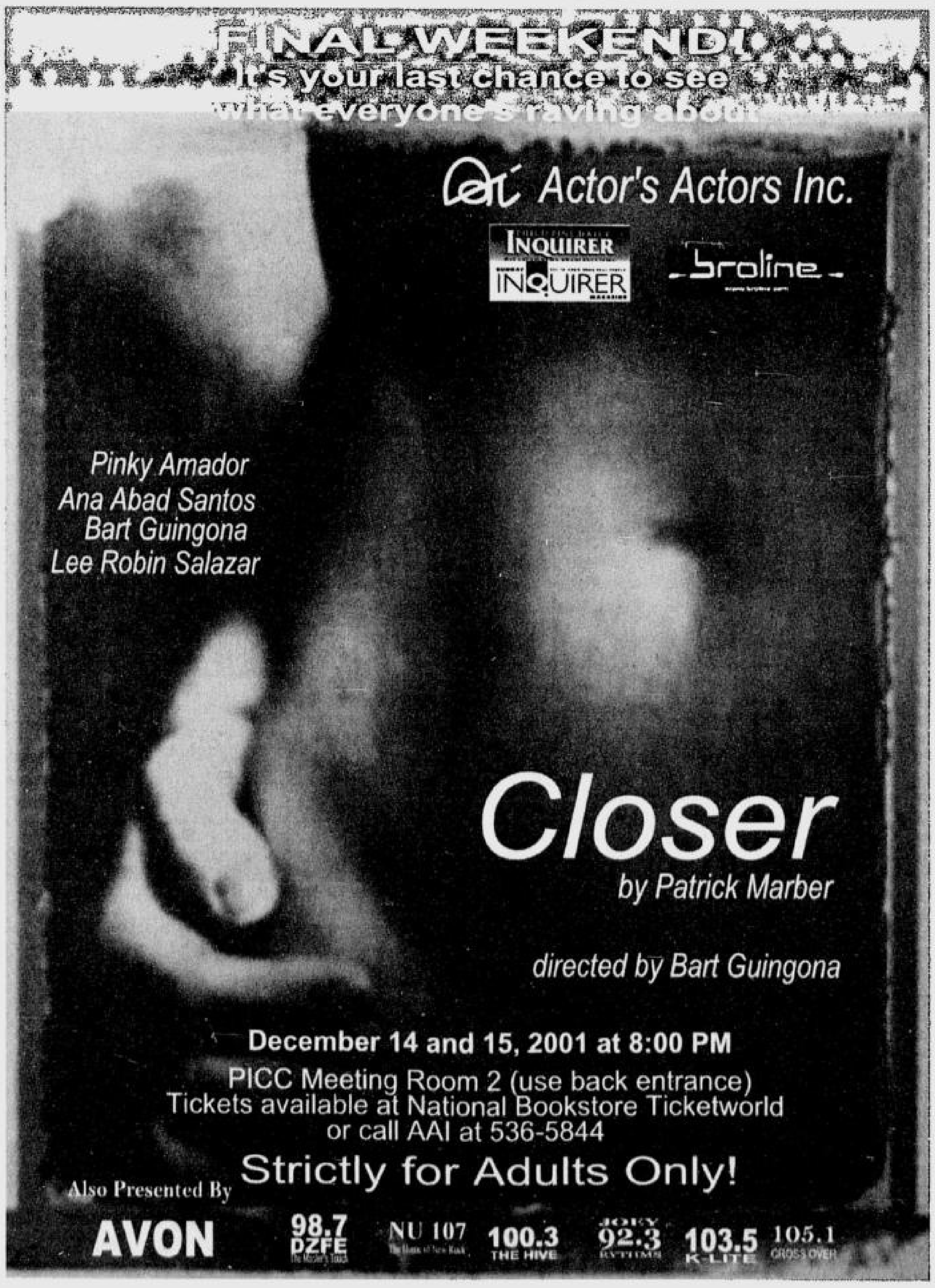
2:10PM	Chunhyang (Korea) R-18	Going By* (Iran)	ID* ** (Philippines)
4:40PM	Erotic Tales 2 (Germany) R-18	Unfinished Song* (Iran)	Taksi ni Pilo* ** (Philippines)
7:10PM	Detector (Norway) R-18	Happy End (Korea) R-18	Angels* ** (Philippines)
9:40PM	Greedy Guts (Otesanek) (Czech Republic) R-18	To and Fro* (De Ida y Vuelta) (Mexico)	Jan Dara (Thailand) R-18

*MTRCB rating pending ** Director will be present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MPC selling Boni stake for $200M

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

PROPERTY developer Metro Pacific Corp. has put a price tag of about $200 million for the sale of its 69.6-percent stake in Bonifacio Land Corp., co-developer of the 150-hectare crown jewel Fort Bonifacio Global City.

Ayala Land Inc. vice president and comptroller Jaime Ysmael yesterday disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange that this was the counter offer presented by MPC for its controlling stake in BLC, which the Ayala group was not willing to pay.

The amount, equivalent to about P10.4 billion at an exchange rate of P52:$1, can cover almost 60 percent of the MPC group's consolidated debt of P17.8 billion.

MPC has put its stake in BLC on the auction block to reduce debts. MPC itself has about P12 billion in obligations, P5 billion of which is owed to its parent firm, Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd., which provided bridge financing to cover BLC's bond obligations early this year.

However, ALI is still haggling with MPC for the controlling stake in BLC, albeit it had maintained that the Ayala group was still continuing discussions with MPC.

Ysmael issued the disclosure to deny a wire report that ALI had offered $500 million for MPC's entire interest in BLC. He said ALI could not have offered such an amount when it had rejected even the $200 million quoted by MPC.

"Ayala Land found the range of values proposed by Metro Pacific in its counter-offer as unacceptable and was forced to reject Metro Pacific's counter-offer for the reason that Ayala Land felt that the appropriate valuation of Metro Pacific's interests in BLC was considerably less than the $200 million proposed by Metro Pacific for the acquisition of its interest in BLC," it said.

But ALI had said it was still keen on BLC and had even requested the First Pacific group to quarantine from the bidding process MPC president Ricardo Pascua, who was trying to structure a management buyout of MPC, in order to ensure a fair bidding process.

As part of the consideration it was willing to pay for the acquisition of all the direct and indirect interests of MPC and First Pacific in BLC, ALI has offered to transfer its 15.8-percent stake in Metro Rail Transit Corp. MPC, however, was not keen on such a scheme since it preferred to raise cash from the sale of its stake in BLC.

BLC has a 55-percent stake in Fort Bonifacio Development Corp., the joint-venture company formed with state-controlled Bases Conversion Development Authority, to develop the 150-hectare Fort Bonifacio Global City. BLC is the holding company of the consortium formed by MPC when the BCDA bid out development rights to the property in 1995. ALI was the stiffest rival of BLC during the bidding.

ING Barings, which was tapped by MPC as its financial adviser to evaluate its options on Fort Bonifacio, is likewise talking to other interested parties and has welcomed any creative offer. The Gokongwei family's Robinsons Land Corp. also earlier disclosed that it had submitted a bid on the BLC stake but has not announced any update since then.

MPC had said that it could easily raise P9 billion in funds from various sources, noting that it could afford not to unload its stake in BLC if the offers were very low.

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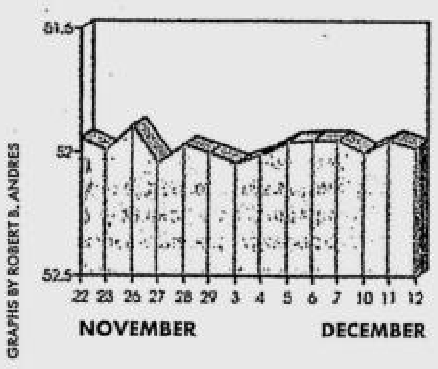

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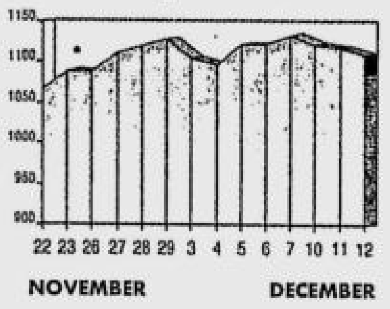

(See stock market report on Page B6)

Shares fall 0.7%

SHARE prices fell 0.7 percent yesterday in a continued correction following recent gains, analysts said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 7.94 points to close at 1,108.62.

"There's a correction still going on because the market went up by a big margin toward the end of November," Teresa Lee-Jahrling of Tower Securities Inc. said.

"It's just a pullback for the market," she said, adding "it's not that bad because the volume is very thin."

Volume rose to 632 million shares worth P356 million from 548.43 million shares worth P231.54 million the previous day.

"The Fed rate cut has been more or less discounted by the market," Yap said. "But there's a strong possibility that the Philippine central bank will cut rates and this could serve as a minor catalyst for the market." *(See story on Page B3.)*

Yap, however, said it may take a few days before the effects of a fresh round of Philippine rate cuts filter into the market. *AFP, AP*

US Fed cuts interest rates

WASHINGTON—The Federal Reserve cut US interest rates a quarter percentage point Tuesday, extending one of the most aggressive rate-cutting campaigns in its history as it tries to lift the economy out of recession.

Fed policymakers said the economy was soft and there were only tentative signs weak demand was firming—a statement some analysts took to mean the rate-easing cycle was not yet over.

The widely expected cut lowered the federal funds rate charged on overnight loans between banks to 1.75 percent, the lowest in 40 years. It was the 11th rate reduction by the US central bank this year, a bold bid to boost consumer and business confidence with unemployment at a six-year high.

In a statement explaining the decision, policymakers said economic risks remained tilted toward weakness, implying they will cut rates again if necessary even though—according to one measure of inflation—the real interest rate now stands below zero in inflation-adjusted terms. *Reuters*

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DOF, DTI resolve row over incentive package

By Clarissa S. Batino

FINANCE Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho yesterday said the government has finally come up with a consolidated position on tax incentives after the Departments of Finance and Trade and Industry resolved their differences on the issue.

"The final draft will come from the DTI but I can safely say that we have already resolved disagreements," said the finance chief.

A consolidated position on tax perks is one of the two legislative agenda that the government will push in Congress in the near term. It will form part of the proposed amendments in the Omnibus Investments Code. The other is the adjustment in the excise taxes on beer and tobacco products.

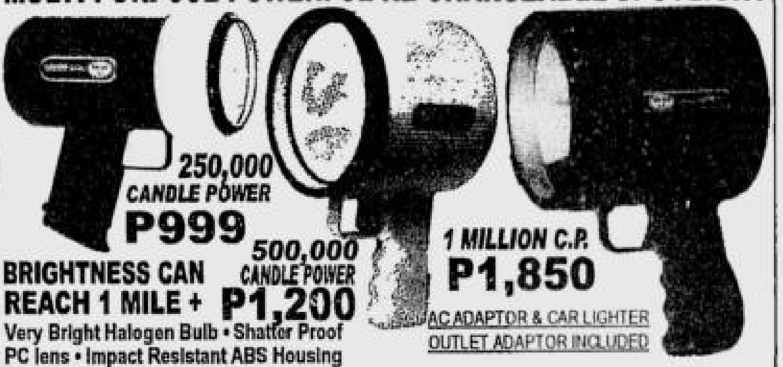
While the trade department had agreed to drop its recommendation for a 12-year income tax holiday, the government has continued checking whether other countries in the region are offering such a sweetener.

In lieu of a 12-year income tax break, the government will give a six-year tax holiday to Metro Manila-based investors and eight-year holiday to those located in the provinces.

The unified position was drawn by an inter-agency task force chaired by the National Economic Development Authority and composed of the DOF, the DTI, the Budget Department and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority.

Camacho said a proposal of the DOF to include in the annual budget a tax incentive expenditure budget has been dropped while a plan of the DTI to offer tax breaks for capital importation of companies servicing the domestic market was also shelved.

"I agree that the notion of a tax incentive budget may clash with the intention of attracting investors and promoting the Philippines as a location. When you promote yourself, you must not give a limit," he noted.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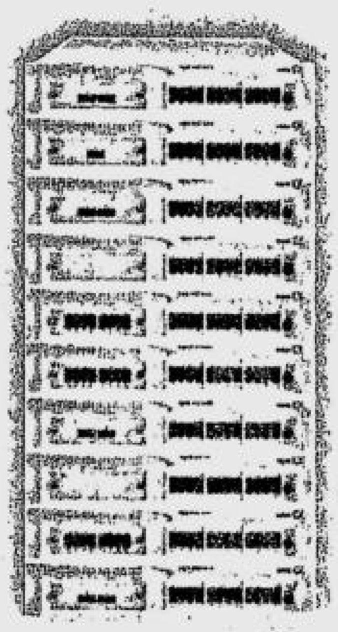
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Watered down the brain

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

MANY years ago, before anybody even got the germ of an idea to hold an economic summit, the PCGG labeled anything to do with Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. as absolute evil.

They said, for one, that Danding was a Marcos crony. What could be worse than that? Moreover, this Danding had the rudeness to have a beautiful, lovely, gracious wife.

Today, anyway, the PCGG has a different view of the man. Apparently the PCGG now believes that anything to do with Danding is rotten.

Thus, somebody in the PCGG wants to shoot down a plan of San Miguel with a bazooka. It so happens Danding now runs San Miguel. The plan must be suspect.

Under the plan, San Miguel takes in a strategic investor. Word going around the stock market points to Japan's enormous Kirin Beer as the most likely choice.

Objection, your honor, says the litigious PCGG, the arrangement contains the maximum propensity to attenuate government interest in the fermenting establishment.

For the benefit of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, who hates legalese, it only means the plan can water down the government's holdings in San Miguel. Really now? Since when?

* * *

NOBODY knows if the boys of PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac have cheeseburgers for brains. Then again, nothing is impossible. Anybody can have watered-down brain.

The investment of Kirin Beer will not dilute the government's holdings in San Miguel. On the contrary, it's good for all San Miguel stockholders. And I mean, ALL!

The company is getting a lot of money from Kirin. The Japanese are even paying a handsome premium. It's not money down the drain. San Miguel can surely use it.

Kirin's buy-in will dilute the government, says the PCGG, because San Miguel is issuing new shares. This is absolutely correct, but the PCGG does omit certain facts.

The fact is, in 1999 and 2000, with the market price of San Miguel shares somewhere down there in the vicinity of purgatory, San Miguel bought its own shares.

It bought about 14 percent, all in all, at dirt cheap prices. Now it is selling the same shares to the Japanese at a huge profit. In short, San Miguel even makes money.

The PCGG says it's bad. The government controls 39 percent of San Miguel. Thus, it benefits up to 39 percent of the profits from the Kirin buy-in. And that's bad?

* * *

MAYBE it's bad because PCGG lawyers have yet to get a centavo out of this new San Miguel deal. They are used to making money out of deals involving San Miguel.

Many years ago, during the time of Kuya Eddie, the PCGG sold a block of shares equivalent to a 4-percent control of San Miguel. They belonged to the coconut levy fund.

By the way, one thing my contacts in business noted about the recent economic summit was the front page photos the next day.

Prominently displayed was Kuya Eddie. As what? Adviser of Gloriaetta, maybe, or provincemate of Yoda Venecia, possibly, or pioneer of the summit industry.

You see, there's word going around about the possible comeback of Kuya Eddie. Thing is, nobody knows in what way.

The summit photo-op perhaps tells us that, come 2004, who knows, Gloriaetta may not be the standard-bearer of Lakas. It seems the rumors are proving to be true.

* * *

ANYWAY, the coconut levy fund used to own 31 percent of San Miguel. Today, after the PCGG sold some shares, the fund only holds 27 percent.

Questions about that secret PCGG deal are clamoring for answers up to now. Did the PCGG act on its own? Who authorized the sale? Where is all that money?

From what I gathered, the PCGG keeps somewhere a stash of cash amounting to P1 billion. Nobody as yet knows where it is exactly, or how much interest it is earning.

At that time, anyway, the boys of Kuya Eddie also tried to do an out-of-court deal on the San Miguel shares of the coconut levy fund. They tried to sell the shares, *mismo*.

Could it be the P1 billion in ready cash was meant for miscellaneous expenses in that deal? Things like commission and the like? Hard to say!

* * *

ANYWAY, this cute administration will kill for investments from abroad. Gloriaetta spent countless hours in Tokyo, personally asking Japanese executives to invest here.

I can understand why. Foreign investments are drying up for the same reasons that our credit rating refuses to improve. There's a perception of too much risk here.

Look, Mamonluk, we are selling a lot of companies like we are holding a business *tiangge*, and all because of troubles in our politics and concerns over our security.

Now, here comes Kirin, which is known the whole world over, wanting to invest here, and not only that, it is even willing to pay for a handsome premium. And that's bad?

I know he was only trying to help this cute administration to encourage investments when a PCGG bright boy gave us this advice: Don't invest in San Miguel!

He even made it to the daily news. That's a government official, mind you! I know now that his cheeseburgers have too much fat extender.

* * *

TELL me, what can be a better advertisement for our country? San Miguel even makes a lot of money out of the deal with Kirin, if in fact it is Kirin that's buying in.

Well, Kirin is not a bad partner, after all. It is a leading beer company in Japan and Asia. All that marketing grasp on the region can't be that bad for San Miguel.

So that's probably why the PCGG wants to shoot down the plan. It's good for San Miguel, and because Danding is running the company, it's also good for him.

Unfortunately, that's bad for the PCGG, because anything to do with Danding is supposed to be rotten. The f..k with San Miguel stockholders, including the government!

All along I thought the PCGG had a noble goal. Its mission in life, whatever is left of it, talks something about "preserving" sequestered assets.

I have to tell the PCGG a secret. Listen, guys, "preserve" does not mean "just stay where you are." It does not mean "no growth." It does not mean "don't do anything."

LRT 2 to start operations ahead of 2004 schedule

By Abigail L. Ho

THE LIGHT Rail Transit Administration said the first phase of the P31.4-billion LRT 2 project would start operations by April 2003, a year ahead of the original schedule.

LRTA chief Teodoro Cruz Jr. said the construction of the first few stations of the LRT 2 phase 1—from Santolan in Pasig to Cubao in Quezon City—would be "fast-tracked to ease the traffic congestion along Marcos Highway and Aurora Boulevard."

The rest of the LRT 2 line, running from Cubao to Sta. Cruz in Manila, will start serving commuters by December 2004.

"When the whole line becomes operational, it will bring down the travel time from Santolan to Sta. Cruz to less than 30 minutes," he said.

The light rail vehicles that will be used on LRT 2 are expected to run at an average speed of around 40 kilometers per hour, Cruz said.

He added that the trains could run up to 80 kilometers per hour, faster than the existing LRT 1 trains and those of Edsa MRT-3.

The Marubeni Corp.-led MRT consortium will provide 18 four-car trains that can each accommodate more than 1,600 passengers.

Once fully operational, the LRT 2 can accommodate up to 600,000 passengers a day, Cruz said.

He said the project could be completed earlier than scheduled because the right-of-way problems, including one that involved beer and tobacco magnate Lucio Tan, that threatened to delay the project have been finally resolved.

A memorandum of agreement signed by LRTA and Tan's group in July enabled the railway agency to use the land formerly occupied by firms owned by the taipan such as Foremost Farms and Himmel Industries for the project.

LRT 2 project manager Enrico Garcia said that around 98 percent of the posts and columns for the 13.8-kilometer railway project had already been put up.

He added that the LRT 2 would have 11 stations: Santolan, Katipunan, Anonas, Cubao, Boston, Gilmore, J. Ruiz, V. Mapa, Pureza, Legarda and Recto.

Funding for the project came from a mixture of loans, grants and counterpart funding from the government. Loans and grants added up to P20.7 billion, while the counterpart funding amounted to P10.7 billion.

FOLLOWING U.S. FED MOVE

BSP seen to cut policy rates today

THE MONETARY Board, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' policy making body, is expected to match today the 25-basis-point cut in the US short-term rates to bring down the BSP's policy rates to levels that could help revive the economy next year.

"The rate reduction by the US Federal Reserve is expected to give us some room to cut our own rates. This should not impact on the foreign exchange," said BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura.

The latest US Fed rate cut, which is the 11th this year, brought down the US short-term interest rates to 1.75 percent.

The expected 25-basis-point cut in the local rates would bring down the total rate reduction this year to 5.75 percentage points.

Last week, the central bank cut its overnight rates by 25 basis points to 8 percent for overnight borrowing and 10.25 percent for overnight lending.

Since December last year, the country's monetary authorities have so far reduced the BSP policy rates by a total of 7.25 percentage points.

Buenaventura earlier said that the BSP could match the US Fed rate cut particularly now that the inflation rate has been on the downtrend and that the economy was in need of a big boost.

The BSP chief wanted to see further reduction in the BSP's policy rates to help boost the economy in the first half of next year.

The recovery, he said, should start during the second half of next year as export receipts were seen to bounce back in view of the expected rebound in the US economy next year.

Buenaventura said he believed the peso would remain below 52 to a dollar until end of this year.

He said the peso would not be affected by the policy rate reduction since the Monetary Board was determined to maintain a reasonable differential between the local and US short-term rates.

The higher the difference in the US and local rates, the better to stabilize the local currency since business would not shift their investments to dollar investments if they enjoy higher returns in the local market.

The central bank chief believed that the economy next year would post better fiscal and monetary figures: lower interest rates, inflation, and budget deficit; and higher growth in gross domestic product.

Clarissa S. Batino

IMF bats for higher oil taxes

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund is urging the Macapagal administration to boost revenue collection by increasing the excise taxes on oil products, raising members' contribution to the state-owned pension funds, and jack up the level of the value-added tax.

During a Philippine economic review concluded last Tuesday, IMF mission head Joshua Felman said increasing tax revenues was essential in ensuring that the country would eliminate its budget deficit by 2006 and for economic growth to remain sustainable in the long term.

The three IMF recommendations, if implemented, could lead to higher oil prices, lower take-home pay for government and private sector workers, and lower earnings for businesses.

The Fund has focused on policy directives in its recent review and has veered away from solid macroeconomic numbers. Felman said the economic targets of the Philippine government for next year were "reasonable and acceptable."

Of the three IMF recommendations, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said the government might be willing to take up only the increase in the contribution to state-owned pension funds—the Social Security System and the Government Service Insurance System.

"The IMF is advocating an increase in taxes of oil products rather than creating a windfall for someone. While crude oil prices are going down, this is a tremendous opportunity for the government to increase taxes that would not necessarily lead to higher oil prices," Felman said.

Felman pointed out that the excise taxes on petroleum products have not gone up since August 1996 while pump prices have nearly doubled since then.

A finance official said that the tax collection rate from petroleum products declines by an average of 0.1 percent annually leading to a P5.2-billion drop in revenue collection each year from the oil sector.

Felman said the government must do to the oil taxes what it had started to do with the beer and tobacco taxes and that was to index the tax rate and adjust it to product prices as they change.

Since 1996, specific taxes on fuel product are as follows: P5.35 per liter of premium gasoline, P4.35 per liter of unleaded, P4.80 per liter of regular gasoline, P1.63 per liter of diesel, P3.67 per liter of jet fuel, 60 centavos per liter of kerosene, 30 centavos per liter of fuel oil, P5.70 per liter of lubricants, P1.76 per liter of asphalt, P4.70 per liter of waxes, P2.53 per liter of thinners, and P1.25 per liter of processed gas.

"We told the IMF that we would consider their suggestions particularly on oil taxes and the VAT. But it would not be high on the agenda. So maybe, on 20 items, these would be the last two," he said.

The IMF had recommended an increase in the VAT rate from 10 percent to 15 percent.

Camacho said the government must first collect its taxes more efficiently and plug the estimated revenue leaks reaching as much as P242 billion. Of this, the government believed that leakage from the value-added tax collection accounted for almost P70 billion.

On the contribution of the SSS' 23 million members and the GSIS' 1.5 million members, the IMF estimated that an increase in the rate would restore the fiscal health of these pension funds.

"In the Philippines, the ratio of benefits to contributions is among the highest in the world and that won't work. The SSS and the GSIS need to find increased sources of revenue, which means contributions have to go up," Felman said.

Members of the SSS contribute only 8.4 percent of their salaries as compared to the 20 percent that the GSIS members remit.

"An increase in contribution, particularly for the SSS, is being considered to make sure that their actuarial reserves are sufficient," Camacho said.

TNT group eyes RP as hub for direct marketing

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

TNT and its partners in a newly formed venture for international business mail is keen on making the Philippines a direct marketing hub in the region.

TNT International Mail emerging market director B. Retnam said TNT and its partners—Consignia (British Post Office) and the Singapore Post—have looked at business opportunities in the Philippines and they were impressed with the country's capacity for promoting direct marketing services in the region.

Retnam said the Philippines had a fast-growing call center, a vastly improved print publishing business, and efficient and relatively cheap telecommunication services that are crucial in implementing direct marketing efforts.

Retnam said TNT, Consignia and Singapore Post were keen on forming alliances with ad agencies and call centers to provide a full package of services for a company's direct marketing strategy. Retnam said TNT and its partners would take care of the distribution end of the business as well as provide mail room service consultancy to firms wanting to improve their correspondence with customers.

Retnam said the Philippines and Asia were slow in embracing direct marketing largely because of the inefficient postal services and corporate cynicism on the benefits of such strategy.

But with the improvement in technology and the new generation of Asians having a more liberal attitude, Retnam said the region was now ready for direct marketing. The biggest hurdle remaining is the local companies' unwillingness to share their database, but Retnam expressed confidence that companies would eventually relent specially if a major multinational company is doing the convincing.

TNT International Mail country manager May Antonia Z. Sinnung said the group expected direct marketing activities to increase by 25 percent next year from P125 million at present. Direct mail accounts for 20 percent of TNT's Philippine operations with an annual turnover of more than P400 million.

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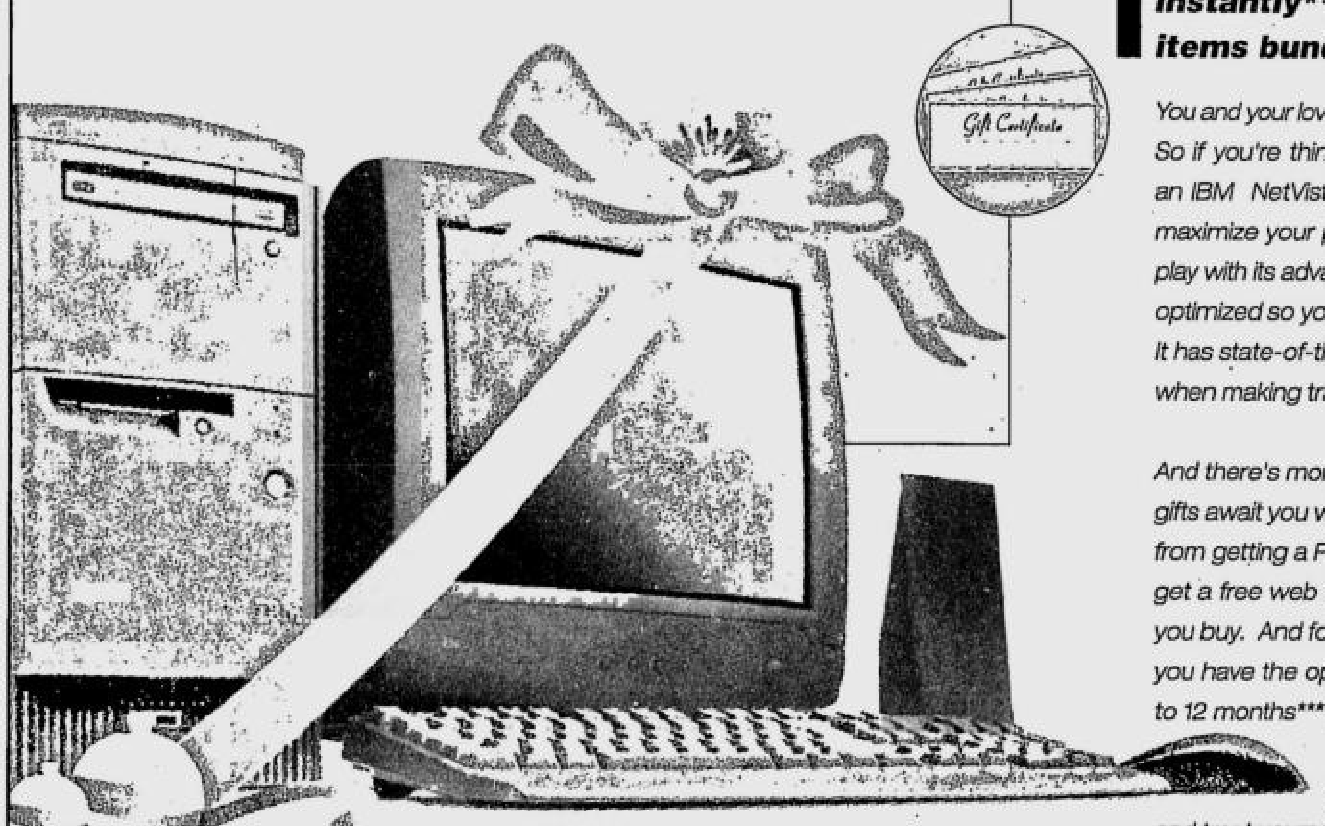

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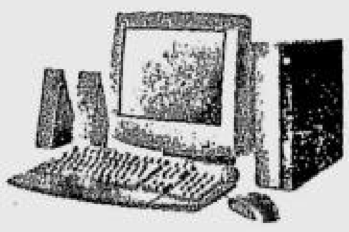

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O most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, fruitful vine splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in this necessity, Oh star of the sea help me and show me, herein you are my Mother Oh Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech You from the bottom of My Heart to succor me in this necessity there are none that can withstand Your power. Oh show me herein You are Mother.

Oh Mary, conceived without sin. Pray for us who have recoursed to thee (3x).

Sweet Mother, I place this cause in Your hands (3x).

Thank you for Your mercy toward me and being mine.

Thank you Mama Mary for answering my prayers. Amen.

(This prayer must be said for three days and after three days, your request will be granted and the prayer must be published.)—TONY M

NOVENA TO THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS AND SAINT JUDE

May the most Sacred Heart of Jesus be praised, blessed, loved, adored and glorified throughout the whole world now and forever. Amen.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Pray for us.

St. Jude, worker of miracles, helper for the helpless, pray for us.

Say nine times a day for nine days. Prayer will be answered by the eighth day, it has never failed.

Thank you very much, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Jude, for favor granted.

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In this regard, we would like to inform you that for the remaining days of December 2001 up to January 15, 2002, we will be busy with the installations and adjustment activities as we transfer the facilities of our Information Technology Group (ITG) to its new office location at Unit 1709, 17/F Jollibee Plaza, Ortigas, Pasig City. Simultaneously, our NCR operations and Rise Finance and Management Corporation will be setting up office at the 8/F, Penthouse of Noah's Arc Building, Escolta, Binondo.

There will be a slight disorder as we engage ourselves with these improvements and adjustment activities. We, therefore, beg for your patience and kind understanding for all the inconveniences you may encounter during the said period.

Rest assured that we are doing all these improvements with the consumers' and subscribers' best interest in mind.

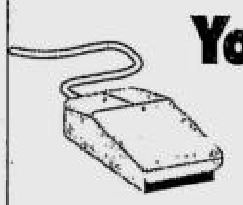
As we continuously affirm our commitment to you, we also make sure that such is guaranteed by our voluntary TRUST FUND mechanism being managed by United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB). Your welfare is our paramount concern.

Thank you very much for your continuous trust and confidence in us.

Rise Group of Companies
Rise E-Commerce Systems, Inc.

ERRATUM

In the above ad, published yesterday December 12, 2001, the phrase in the second paragraph—the remaining days of December 2001 up to December 15, 2002, should have been **December 2001 up to January 15, 2002**.



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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the application of **OVERSEA FEEDS CORPORATION** with address at Balud, San Fernando, Cebu for registration with the Board of Investments under Book I of the Omnibus Investments Code of 1987, otherwise known as E.O. 226, as amended by Republic Act 7918 as Expanding Toll-Processor of Floating Aquatic Feeds at a capacity of 7,200 Tons Per Year and with proposed plant site at Balud, San Fernando, Cebu has been officially accepted on **December 10, 2001** and is currently being processed.

Any person with valid objections to or pertinent comments on the above-mentioned application may file his/her objection, in writing and under oath, with the BOI within one (1) week from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) CHITA O. ANGELES
Director
Legal Services Department

(PDI--Dec. 13, 2001)

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In Loving Memory
on the
Eleventh Death Anniversary
of

Justice SAMUEL F. REYES

who went to his Eternal Rest on the
13th Day of December 1990

We, the children, grandchildren and great granddaughter of the late Justice Samuel F. Reyes request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Masses will be offered at the Cauayan Parish Church, Cauayan, Isabela and at the Cathedral of Baguio City.

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Matthew 10:39

ARCH. EROS MELCHOR P. PAREDES

Peacefully joined the Lord on December 11, 2001 at the age of 51.

Leaving behind him, his wife **Paulita**; son **Ion**; daughters **Ivy** and **Paula**; daughter-in-law **Norie**; grandsons **Ivan** and **Karl**; father **Arch. Aquiles C. Paredes**; parents-in-law **Atty. Pablo** and **Lualhati Roberto**; brothers and sisters.

His remains lie at Nacional Memorial Homes (Chapel 2-A), 264 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be announced later.

"To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

The entire **Zapata** family is sincerely sympathizing with and offering prayers to **Engineer Eric Garovillo** and **Dra. Eva Claire Z. Garovillo** in the wake of the untimely demise of their second born, **Erika Karla**, 1 year and 4 months old, on December 8, 2001.

The interment was held yesterday, December 12, 2001 at Solano Cemetery after the 8 a.m. Mass at the Catholic Church in Solano, Nueva Viscaya.

God Is Good

We thank Him for giving us the time, short as it may seem, to love and care for

Jose Carlo Yturzaeta

We also thank the Lord for giving us many friends who made the burden of losing our beloved Carlo a lot easier to bear.

Caloy, Pia & Karla
and the rest of the Yturzaeta family

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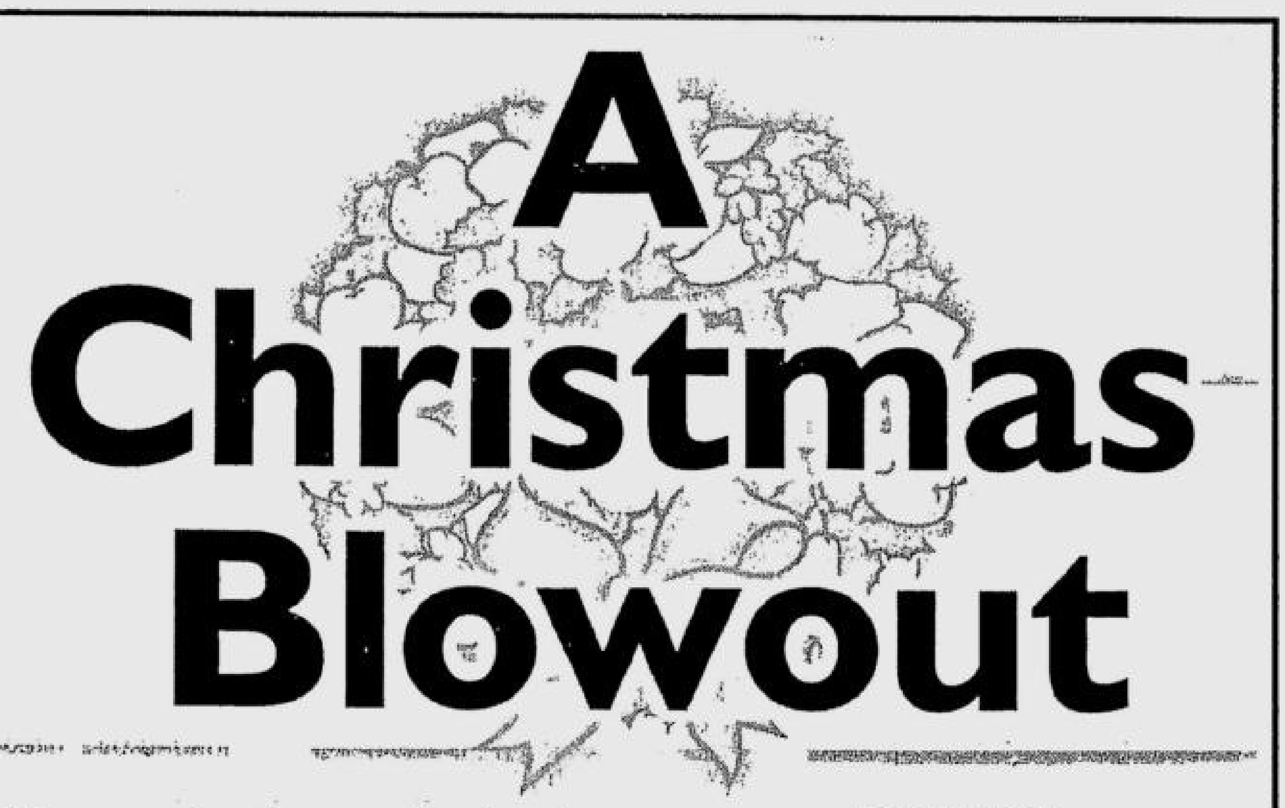

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On December 25, 2001, **INQUIRER Classifieds** will make your holiday season brighter by accepting both line and box ads for the December-25 issue at a special discounted rate of P50 per line or P180 per column centimeter.

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Jaymie,
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Jet

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Merry Christmas Erniel God bless you and your family – Sheryl

size: 3 lines
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Merry Christmas Sasal God bless you and your family.May you have a fruitful New Year – Shara

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cost: P200 VAT exclusive

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BENGUET CORPORATION

One Corporate Plaza
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ANNOUNCEMENT

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Stockholders' Meeting of Benguet Corporation will be held on Tuesday, December 18, 2001 at 3 o'clock in the afternoon at the Sign of the Anvil, 5/F Equitable-PCI Bank Tower I, Makati Avenue corner H.V. dela Costa, Makati City, Philippines.

By authority of the Board of Directors

(Sgd.) **HERMOGENE H. REAL**
Corporate Secretary

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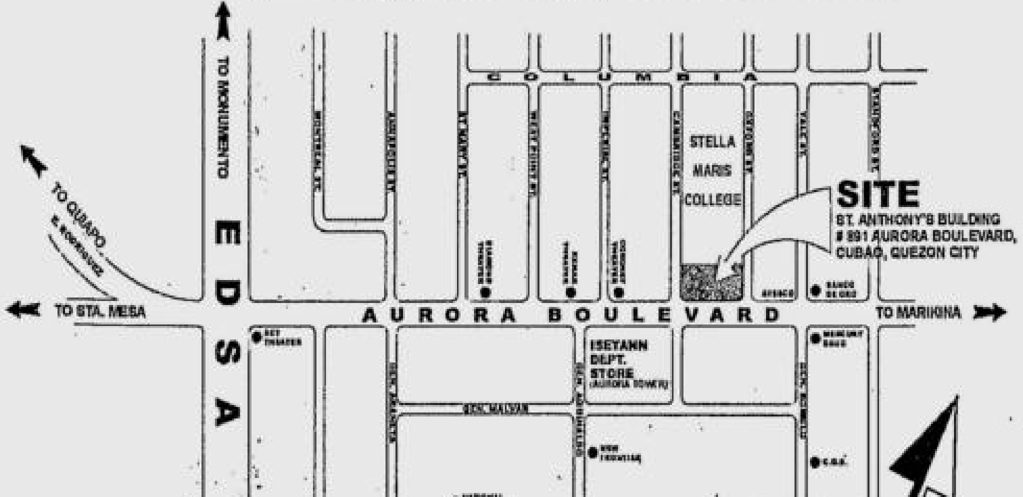

Ayala to buy shares excluded from Pure Foods-SMC deal

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

AYALA Corp. said yesterday it would offer to buy minority shares in three subsidiaries holding assets excluded from the sale of Pure Foods Corp. to San Miguel Corp. earlier this year.

In a disclosure, Ayala managing director and assistant corporate secretary Renato Marzan said Ayala would offer to buy shares held by minority stockholders in PFC Properties Inc., PF Prime Properties Inc. and PFN Holdings Corp.

These companies are expected to be among the unlisted subsidiaries that Ayala will spin off into a new unit to make them more productive.

Ayala has mapped out a restructuring plan involving the creation of a new division that will find new and creative ways of unlocking value from non-core subsidiaries and investments. Former Energy Secretary Delfin Lazaro has been appointed head of the new unit.

The new unit will have possession of idle and non-strategic real estate. Analysts expect the soon-to-be-spun-off company to provide more management focus and help unload assets that are not shoveling enough revenue into the Ayala group.

Marzan said the left-over assets from the Pure Foods-San Miguel deal had been declared as property dividends to stockholders as of May 21 this year.

He said the tender offer was estimated to amount to P72 million or P20.96 per Pure Foods share held.

Ayala is already set to sell its stake in the Burger King fast-food franchise apart from the three property units excluded from the Pure Foods-San Miguel deal.

After divesting its stake in Pure Foods, Ayala is focusing on its three main subsidiaries—Ayala Land Inc., Bank of the Philippine Islands and Globe Telecom Inc.

In an earlier disclosure, Ayala said the changes in its existing structure was necessary in view of the rapidly shifting global and regional landscape.

"Over time and as business conditions improve, this new division envisions to identify opportunities, develop these into significant businesses with outstanding potential and active manage these businesses. These changes and initiatives are expected to result in significantly enhanced long-term value creation potential for Ayala Corp.'s shareholders," it said.

Landco says it's unaffected by Metro debts

BY ABIGAIL L. HO

LANDCO Pacific Corp., a subsidiary of Metro Pacific Corp., said yesterday that it was "unaffected" by its parent firm's debt problems, as it expressed confidence it would be able to wipe out its own P1-billion debt load in two to three years.

"(Metro Pacific's) debts have no effect on us per se. We have no problems with our customers and (creditors)," Landco president and chief executive Alfred Xerez-Burgos told the INQUIRER.

Landco chief finance officer Francis Ceballos added that Landco was a "freely operating unit" of debt-ridden Metro Pacific and was not getting any funding from its parent firm.

Xerez-Burgos, however, admitted that Landco was "still working for the banks" as of the moment.

"We'll wipe out our debts in three to four years. We'll be healthy after this. We're doing well now because we anticipated the situation through a disciplined strategy of paying off our debts," he said.

He added that Landco would be able to do this through income generated from the sale of its products, including town and city centers, leisure parks, residential resorts and memorial parks.

"The products we'll be selling will sufficiently address our cash needs to pay our debts," Xerez-Burgos stressed.

Ceballos reported that Landco's cash flow was currently "okay, but it could be better." He said the company was still able to pay the salaries of its employees, service its debts and put in new investments.

He added that Landco had done some downsizing to become more operationally efficient since Metro Pacific bought into the company in 1995.

From 650 employees in end-1996 and 450 employees in end-1997, Caballos said, Landco now has only 170 employees.

"We're more profitable and efficient now," he said.

Landco posted a 31-percent growth in sales during its fiscal year that ended in October. This translated to P1.2 billion in sales.

The company was also able to cut its total debt load to only P1 billion after it trimmed its obligations by a total of P2 billion at both the head office and the project levels.

Around P1.2 billion of the reduced debts were at the head office while another P800 million were at the project level.

Its parent firm, Metro Pacific, is currently struggling to pay off over P12.5 billion in debts: P7.5 billion to third-party creditors and P5 billion to its parent, Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd.

Metro Pacific chair Manuel Pangilinan said in an earlier statement that the sale of Metro Pacific's stake in Bonifacio Land Corp. remained the "company's top priority."

Landco is 60 percent owned by Metro Pacific. Its board of directors and advisors include key officials of Metro Pacific and its subsidiaries.

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Hutchison cites rule to run stores in RP

HUTCHISON Whampoa Ltd. has invoked the "grandfather rule" so that its newly formed subsidiary may be pre-qualified by the Department of Trade and Industry to operate a chain of Watson's health and beauty stores and drugstores in partnership with the SM group of companies.

SM chief Teresita Sy said the use of the "grandfather rule" should clear the way for Hutchison's Watson's Personal Care Stores (Philippines) Ltd. to go into local retailing under the retail trade liberalization law.

Under the law, a foreign investor must have a net worth of at least $200 million, five retail branches, and come from a country whose retail industry is open to Filipinos before they are allowed to own at least 60 percent of a Philippine retail store. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

SEC chief says ₱4-M threshold no hindrance

THE ANTI-MONEY Laundering Council plans to freeze bank accounts suspected of being used to launder dirty money even if these contain less than P4 million, Securities and Exchange Commission Chair Lilia Bautista said yesterday.

"Even though there's less than P4 million, we can go after the account if it is really based on the proceeds of a crime," Bautista said in an interview.

The Financial Action Task Force has advised that it will keep the Philippines in its list of "non-cooperative" countries unless the Philippines relaxes a provision in its anti-money laundering law that sets a P4-million threshold for suspicious accounts.

The law provides that only accounts in excess of P4 million may be frozen for investigation of possible money laundering activities.

Bautista stressed, however, that the Anti-Money Laundering Council's responsibility was to investigate all suspicious accounts.

DISCLOSURES

THE BOARD of **La Tondeña Distillers Inc.** has declared a cash dividend of 37.50 centavos a share payable on Jan. 30 to all stockholders as of Dec. 28. The stock and transfer books will be closed from Dec. 29 to Jan. 4.

* * *

THE BOARD of **Far Eastern University Inc.** has declared a cash dividend of P7.50 a share payable on Jan. 17 to stockholders as of Jan. 7. The books will be closed from Jan. 7 to 16.

* * *

DIVERSIFIED Financial Network Inc. has reported that there has been no active trading of its shares the past few days. It is unaware of any event or information that may have caused the sudden decrease in the market price of its shares by 39.55 percent.

* * *

THE BOARD of **Philippine Tobacco Flue-Curing and Redrying Corp.** will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Feb. 5. It will be held at its principal office in Balintawak, Quezon City, at 2 p.m. The record date is Dec. 21. ***Compiled by Armin P. Adina, PDI Research***

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Wednesday, December 12, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	3,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	53	53	52.5	53	305,700
China Banking Corp.	580	580	580	580	200
Chinatrust Comm. Bank	18	18	18	18	10,900
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	22	22	21.75	22	893,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	178	179	176	176	38,590
Philippine National Bank	53	54	53	54	70,500
Security Bank Corp.	16	16	14.75	14.75	233,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	14.75	14.75	14.5	14.5	56,800
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.04	120,000
Filipino Fund Inc	0.28	0.32	0.28	0.32	690,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1160	1170	1155	1165	27,980
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24.25	24.25	24.25	24.25	1,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.36	0.36	1,910,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	580	580	580	580	2,180
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.028	2,100,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	100,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp	3	3.1	3	3.1	13,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	410	412.5	410	412.5	89,220
Philweb.Çom Inc.	0.019	0.02	0.019	0.019	51,800,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	23.25	23.25	23	23	30,300
Manila Electric Co. B	31.5	31.5	30.5	30.5	668,800
Petron Corp.	1.56	1.56	1.54	1.54	4,898,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.88	1.92	1.88	1.9	1,190,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	11,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	70,000
Union Cement Corp.	1	1	1	1	5,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	164,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	6	6	6	6	102,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	11.5	12	11.5	12	11,300
RFM Corp.	2.1	2.14	2.1	2.14	581,000
San Miguel Corp. A	41.5	41.5	41.5	41.5	385,500
San Miguel Corp. B	50	50	49.5	49.5	219,100
Vitarich Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	5	5	5	5	5,000
Ayala Corp.	4.75	4.8	4.6	4.6	4,509,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	111,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.74	0.74	0.72	0.74	1,270,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	52,000,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10	10	10	500
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	170,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.85	0.85	0.8	0.8	9,440,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	400,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.17	0.175	1,830,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.89	0.9	0.89	0.9	60,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	26	26	26	26	149,800
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	3,010,000
Ionics Inc.	7	7	6.7	6.7	71,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	115,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	7,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.7	0.71	0.7	0.7	1,550,000
Magnum Holdings Inc	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	20,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.32	0.33	10,970,000
Music Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.37	0.37	13,530,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.35	0.38	0.35	0.37	680,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.18	0.19	0.17	0.19	640,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.27	0.3	260,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Central Azucar Don Pedro	0.78	0.79	0.78	0.78	400,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	12.25	12.5	12.25	12.5	36,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.46	1,330,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.5	0.51	660,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	24	24	24	24	1,611,200
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.56	1.56	1.48	1.5	483,000
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0012	0.0012	0.0012	0.0012	74,000,000
Philweb.Com Inc. -Warrants	0.0055	0.006	0.005	0.0055	196,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.8	4.85	4.75	4.8	11,353,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	100,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.22	3,170,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.37	0.37	0.35	0.35	1,770,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.245	0.245	0.235	0.24	3,980,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	10,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.76	1.78	1.74	1.78	4,132,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	140,000
SM Development Corp.	0.83	0.85	0.83	0.85	2,200,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.2	6.2	6.1	6.2	2,626,000
Urbancorp Realty Dev. Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	220,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	10,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	2.55	3	2.5	2.95	176,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.02	12,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	10,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	20,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.016	0.016	0.015	0.016	19,500,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	120,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	500,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	75,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0055	0.006	0.0055	0.006	23,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	2,450,470	83,878,815.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	439,769,900	188,540,075.00
PRO	29,701,000	82,276,940.00
Mining	62,306,000	1,250,500.00
OIL	98,000,000	547,000.00
GRAND TOTALS :	632,227,370	356,493,330.00

	AVERAGES	
Banks & Fin Svc	447.79	DOWN 0.35
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,533.23	DOWN 16.07
PRO	496.88	DOWN 2.40
Mining	1,021.85	DOWN 9.84
OIL	1.90	UP 0.04
All Shares Index	693.40	DOWN 2.82
Composite	1,108.62	DOWN 7.94

NO. OF ADVANCES: 15; NO. OF DECLINES: 42; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 29;
NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 86; NO. OF TRADES: 2,121

CURRENCIES

Dec. 12, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.119194	1.000000	51.9590
Japan	Yen	0.008881	0.007935	0.4123
United Kingdom	Pound	1.611416	1.439800	74.8106
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.143671	0.128370	6.6700
Switzerland	Franc	0.677151	0.605034	31.4370
Canada	Dollar	0.711729	0.635930	33.0423
Singapore	Dollar	0.611248	0.546150	28.3774
Australia	Dollar	0.576013	0.514668	26.7416
Bahrain	Dinar	2.968843	2.652661	137.8296
Kuwait	Dinar	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.298452	0.266667	13.8558
Brunei	Dollar	0.609218	0.544336	28.2832
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000111	0.000099	0.0051
Thailand	Baht	0.025570	0.022847	1.1871
UAE	Dirham	0.304791	0.272331	14.1500
Korea	Won	0.000882	0.000788	0.0409
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.893500	46.4254
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.456839	23.7369
France	Franc	0.152450	0.136213	7.0775
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453781	0.405453	21.0669
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.064933	3.3739
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.022149	1.1508
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000461	0.0240
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.150276	7.8082
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004457	0.2316
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.00537	0.2790
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.022149	1.1508
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.134511	58.9481

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intel®

People, Events & Products

ARIES B. ESPINOSA, Assistant Editor

aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Exclusive S&R Price Membership shopping treat for Citibank cardholders

CITIBANK opens the doors to the exclusive S&R Price Membership Shopping to give its credit cardholders a taste of privileged shopping for free.

From Dec. 21 to 24 and Dec. 28 to 31, Citibank cardholders only need to present their Citibank credit cards and they can shop at their heart's content in S&R Price Membership Shopping. No need to pay the membership fee.

This exclusive treat is open to Citibank Silver Visa and MasterCard, Citibank Gold Visa and MasterCard, Shell-Citibank MasterCard, Citibank Cathay Pacific Visa and Citibank Visa Platinum cardmembers. Each cardholder can bring up to three companions. Grab this chance to do some leisurely shopping or stock up on groceries for your Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve feasts.

More great news. If these free entrance weekends will make you want to visit S&R regularly, you can apply for membership and pay the P1,500 fee over three equal PayLite installments at 0 percent interest. The offer is valid until Dec. 31.

Citibank cardholders can also avail of the PayLite Installment Plan at reduced interest rates for a minimum P5,000 spend. PayLite is a value feature exclusive to Citibank cardholders that lets them pay for purchases P5,000 and higher over longer and lighter installment terms of 3,6,9,12,18 and 24 months.

Plus, all S&R Price Membership Shopping expenses will earn Citibank Rewards points which cardholders can exchange for free gifts, air miles for free trips and annual fee waivers.

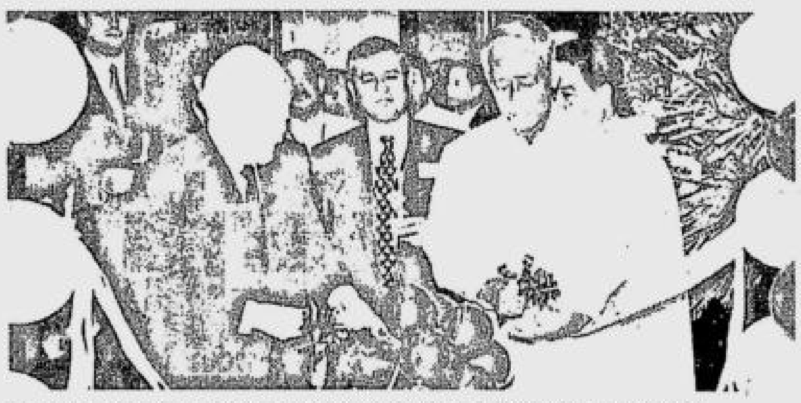
With outlets at the Fort Bonifacio Global City and along Ortigas Avenue Extension in Pasig City, S&R Price Membership Shopping offers the best value for money with its wide variety of high quality bestselling American and local brands at low prices.

S&R Price Membership Shopping was named after Sol and Robert Price, who developed the membership shopping concept and founded Price Club in 1976, who developed the membership shopping concept and founded Price Club in 1976. The store is patterned after its mother company in San Diego in the United States and provides a conducive atmosphere for shopping with its clean surroundings and impressive store layout.

For more details, call the 24-hour CitiPhone at 995-9999 in Metro Manilá, 234-9999 in Metro Cebu, and 1-800-10-995-9999 in other provinces.

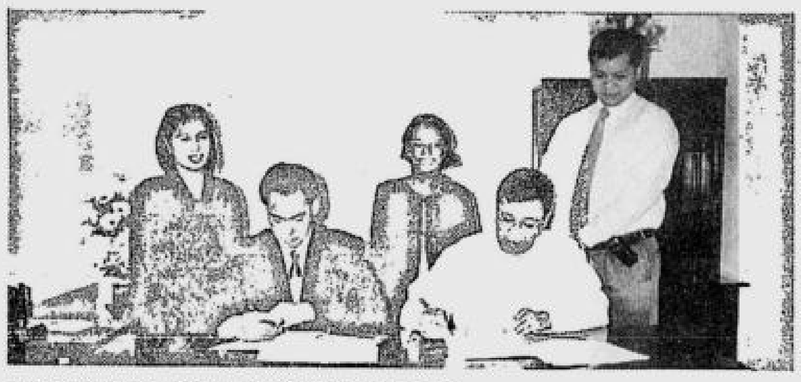
SIRCRO SENDS OFF SMALL

The Society of Realtors (Sircro) gave a send-off to Jones Lang LaSalle managing director Peter Small (third from left) who has been reassigned to London, during its monthly meeting held recently at the Leisure Club, fourth floor Equitable Tower, Paseo de Roxas. Also shown are Jonathan Lu (UCPB Properties), Jose Gamatero (Light Industries and Science Park), Sircro president Arnold Canaria (Filinvest Industrial), treasurer Richard SyCip (Thocaris I), Dennis Decena (Roxaco Land) and Katrina Yatco (Ayala Land). Sircro is a guild of top professionals in the field of residential, commercial and industrial real estate.



PHILAMLINE OPENS ONE-STOP SERVICE CENTER

The Philippine American Life and General Insurance Company (Philamlife) recently inaugurated its newest business center located at the ground floor of Philamlife Building, UN Avenue, Ermita, Manila. The UN Philam business center is the latest addition to the company's growing roster of business centers and is by far the biggest in terms of volume transactions and staff counts. Leading the ribbon cutting ceremonies were Philamlife president and CEO Jose L. Cuisia Jr. and insurance commissioner Eduardo T. Malinis. Also present were (from left) Philam Insurance president and CEO Joost Vink, Philam Care president and CEO Verne Quiazon, and Rev. Fr. Abet Tanghal. Philamlife is affiliated with AIG, the leading US-based international insurance and financial services organization.



MEDSERV, HEALTHWAY TIE UP

MedServ, marketer of the innovative ER5000 card, has tied up with Healthway Medical Clinics, a subsidiary of Vista Healthcare Asia Pte. Ltd. Now ER5000 holders can avail of services from any of the Healthway Medical Clinics in Binondo, Greenbelt Shopping Center, Festival Supermall, Alabang Town Center, Laguna Technopark, SM North Edsa and Ayala Life Building in Makati City. Shown (seated, from left) are Ding S. Macalino, MedSev Hospital Relations and Services senior manager; Dr. John Evangelista, Healthway CEO; (standing, from left) Mariemay Penaga, MedServ HRS assistant; Sarah Roger, Healthway senior marketing manager; and Dr. John Beltran, Healthway COO.

EW T
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SMART DONATES TO PAYATAS KIDS

As part of its community relations efforts, Smart Communications Inc. recently donated books, toys and instructional materials to the students of the Cashew Tree House Learning Center, a pre-school for the indigent children of Barangay Payatas, Quezon City. In simple turnover ceremonies held at the school, Smart public affairs head Ramon Isberto along with some Smart employees handed over more than P40,000 worth of books, school supplies and other educational materials to the Cashew Tree House school principal Chat Aban. The project aimed to provide the Payatas children with a mini-library which they can use during their stay in school. Shown is Chat Aban (right), Cashew Tree House Learning Center principal receiving the certificate of donation of books and learning materials from Ramon Isberto, Smart public affairs head.

JEFFREY WINS A CITY

Ellen T. Suarez, marketing manager of Motorola Communications Phils. Inc. is awarding the key of Honda City 1.3 LXI to Jeffrey Bobis who is the first prize winner of the Motorola Angel T300/T180 Talk N' Text Highway to Heaven promo.

Prestone launches grand raffle contest for loyal patrons

THE NUMBER one brand in the brake fluid industry shows its gratitude to its loyal clients for years of patronage through a new raffle promo called "Basta Prestone Lovers, Lucky Winners".

Win up to P100,000 in cash, aside from colored TVs, VCD players, and a kitchen package with this new grand promo. No risky bets, no questions to answer, and no hassles to join – just buy any of the following Prestone products to join the raffle: 170 ml, 300 ml or 1 liter Prestone Brake Fluid, or 500 ml, 1 liter or 3 liters of Prestone II Longlife Coolant Concentrate.

Enclose in an envelope a foil seal of Prestone Brake Fluid or the container cap of Prestone II Longlife Coolant Concentrate. At the back, write your name, address, telephone number, signature, name of the outlet or store where you made your purchase, the outlet/store address and the name of the clerk/attendant. You can drop your entries in designated dropboxes at stores and outlets, or mail to "Prestone Lovers, Lucky Winners", Clorox International Philippines Inc. 15th Floor, JMT Corporate Condominium, ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

Major prizes are at stake: five lucky winners will have a chance to win P100,000 each for the first prize; P50,000 for the second prize, also for five winners and P25,000 for 10 winners for the third prize. Outlets meanwhile get a chance to win one 14" colored TV for the first prize (five outlets), one cellular phone for the second prize (five outlets) and a kitchen package for the third prize (10 outlets).

Store clerks or attendants will automatically be given special prizes just for selling Prestone products. One VCD player will be given away for the first prize (five winners); one cellular phone for the second prize (five winners) and one sack of rice for the third prize (10 winners).

Other special prizes to be given away are 14" colored TV units, VCD players, other household appliances, and Prestone T-shirts.

The five winners for each raffle will be picked from the following regions: NCR, North Luzon, South Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Winners will be telegrammed about details where they can claim their prizes.

The promo period starts from Oct. 1 to Jan. 15, 2002. The grand raffle draw will be held on Jan. 31 at the CIPI Bicutan Plant, Mindanao Textile Compound, Severina Industrial Estate, Bicutan, Parañaque.

Nestle
umstick
GIVEAWAY

GADGET GIVEWAYS FROM NESTLE

The Nestle Gadget Giveaway promo recently gave away top-of-the-line gadgets to lucky winners winning mini-cone sleeves hidden in selected Nestle Drumsticks. Among the prizes given away were Ericsson 380 personal digital handphones, Siemens SL45 MP3 player handphones, Casio WQV-2 digital camera wristwatches and Sony Clie MP3 players. Thousands of Nestle Drumstick ice cream cones were also given away for free. Shown is Nestle Drumstick brand manager David Quiec (left) presenting an Ericsson R380 to Cesar Punzalan (right), winner of Nestle's latest promo offering.

Chorale competition hits high note

HIMIG ng Pasko sa Marikina 2001 got underway as auditions for chorale and solo categories were held recently. More than 50 singing groups and soloists from Pasig City, Antipolo City, Marikina City, San Mateo, Taytay and Rodriguez Rizal trooped to the plush Skyline Riverbend Hotel and Convention Center to participate in the day-long try-outs.

Seven chorale groups led by the Roosevelt College Chorale of Marikina, Sienna College High School Glee Club of Taytay Rizal and the Antipolo National high School will compete in the grand finals. Lita de Garcia, daughter of Filipino Overseas Workers stationed in Taiwan and resident of Taytay, Rizal leads 9 other soloists to compete in the solo category.

Prizes at stake for the chorale are P20,000 for the first prize, P10,000 for the second prize, P5,000 for the third prize. For the solo category, the first prize winner will receive P10,000, second prize winner will receive P5,000 and third prize winner will receive P3,000.

Indefatigable and hardworking Marikina City Mayor Marides C. Fernando is the guest of honor and keynote speaker in the awards night to be held on Dec. 16. She is joined by sponsors and supporters led by Medic One Step Urine Pregnancy Test, DZAR Angel Radyo, World Citi Colleges, Skyline Riverbend Hotel and Convention Center, Pulmo Mist Handheld Nebulizer, Philippine Daily Inquirer, ALPK2 Sphygmomanometer, Persona Waist Shaper, Hartmann BP Monitor, Vicks Digital Thermometer, KAZ Steam Vaporizer, Noritake Porcelana, Hallmark, Rustans, Expresslane, Savemore Supermarket, Coca-Cola, PCO-Plus Food Supplement, Pretzel Flipz by Nestle and Kidoo Ultrasonic Nebulizer.

MMA Media Inc. is the producer of Himig ng Pasko sa Marikina 2001. The full-service advertising agency focuses on community activities east of Metro Manila and provides complete tri-media services thereat.

AMSPEC SPONSORS WORLD BAZAAR FESTIVAL

Amalgamated Specialties Corp. (Amspec), the manufacturer of the famous Mongol pencils, recently signed up as one of the sponsors for the First World Bazaar Festival for Bantay Bata 163, happening from Dec. 19 to 25 at the World Trade Center, Pasay City. Open from 2 p.m. until midnight, the bazaar boasts of quality goods at bargain prices plus shopping convenience and ease to give shoppers a rewarding experience. Apart from Mongol, Amspec manufactures and imports internationally known brand names of school and office supplies such as Crayola crayons, Lotus writing instruments, Super Sharpie Permanent Markers, and Li'l Hands art and crafts products, which will be made available to shoppers at attractive prices during the bazaar. Proceeds of the bazaar will go to ABS-CBN Foundation's Bantay Bata 163. Signing the memorandum of agreementare (second from left) Tonton Ravana-Severino, Amspec's marketing manager and (third from left) Tintin Liboro, managing director for Worldbex Services International, organizer of the World Bazaar Festival. Also shown are (from left) Riza Crisostomo-Abian, Amspec's business development officer and Alfie Zafra, vice president for internal affairs for Worldbex.

BITS Clips

FEBC Christmas music fest

FAR EAST Broadcasting Company (FEBC) Philippines, in cooperation with Vima Inspirational Music, presents the "Christians, Rejoice!" Christmas music festival at the UP Theater on Dec. 15, Saturday, beginning at 6 p.m. The Christmas concert will feature a variety of Christmas carols which will be interpreted by the UCCP Ellinwood Malate Church Chancel Choir, The Harvest and The Praise Factory of Greenhills Christian Fellowship, the Psalmists of Malabon International Baptist Church, Bass Clef Quintet and the joint choirs and tambourine dancers of the Iemelif Church. Gospel singer and theater actress Carla Martinez will be the special guest. Proceeds from the Christmas festival will be used for the transmitter project of an FEBC station in Bacolod City, 1233 DYVS. For ticket information, call FEBC at 292-5603 local 114 or 189, e-mail creative@febc.org.ph, or the Vima office at 453-1173/927-7829.

Adarna House sale

ADARNA House, the leading publisher of children's books, will hold its annual Christmas sale up to Dec. 15 at the Adarna House showroom, 73-A Scout Limbaga Street, Barangay Laging Handa, Quezon City. Discounts of up to 50 percent are available on children's books, gift items, and young adult novellas. Adarna will also host basic toy-making workshops for parents and children. The Toys for Stories workshop will be slated on Dec. 15, 9 a.m. to 12 noon. For more details, call 372-3548 to 49.

NPHS/BNHS grand alumni homecoming

THE NORTH Provincial High School and the Bacnotan National High School invites all graduates to attend the grand alumni Homecoming on Dec. 15 at the BNHS grounds. Lots of surprises, prizes and memories await guests. Batch 1978-1979 graduates are requested to call Matilde Buccat-Ortiz at (072) 242-5353/0917-4780733, or e-mail matilde.ortiz@ccbpi.com for details.

YWCA advisers tackle social action

THE OFFICERS of Phase I-B (Leadership Training Program held last November in Tagaytay City) met for the social action implementation of their project plans in preparation for the planning sessions. The meeting resulted in a double-treat program—a reunion and a Christmas party, which will be held right after the annual Candlelight Ceremony on Dec. 15, Saturday, at the Manila YWCA VE Sanchez Hall. The officers of the Young Women Club Advisers are Evelyn Villar (President), Judy Ann R. Marquez (vice president), Divina Barrientos (secretary), Joan Gomez (treasurer), Lourdes Sevilleja and Phyllis Ma. A. Kitane (PROs). Meanwhile, the Development Institute committee chaired by YWCA president Cindy Dollente Ang and co-chaired by Dr. Agnes Pajares, has been preparing for the Leadership Training program in February 2002.

Asia Brewery raffle promo

ASIA Brewery Inc. (ABI) recently launched its newest promo "Happy Trip sa Tropa". Any of eight exciting trips to Singapore, Seoul, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Jakarta, Saigon, Shanghai and Tokyo await you and your barkada of four, inclusive of roundtrip airfare, hotel accommodations, and pocket money. Just collect four crowns of any ABI products—Beer na Beer, Colt 45, Stag Pale Pilsen, Carlsberg, Budweiser, Manila Beer or Q Shandy—and mail your entries to "Happy Trip sa Tropa" promo, care of Euro RSCG Phils., 16th floor, Robinsons Equitable Tower, ADB Avenue corner Poveda Street, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. You may also exchange four ABI crowns for raffle coupons from selected bars and restaurants. Hundreds of cases of ABI products will also be given away. First raffle draw is on Dec. 15. Grand raffle draw is on Feb. 14, 2002.

RC of Cainta's contests

THE ROTARY Club of Cainta, District 3800, will hold two major events on Dec. 16 at the Cainta Central Elementary School, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The "Himig ng Kapaskuhan", a choral contest of Christmas songs and "Ningning ng Parulan", a lantern-making contest using recycled or scrap materials, will be participated in by over 300 students from public elementary schools in Cainta. Major sponsor for the "Himig ng Kapaskuhan" is the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., through its Cainta branch, while sponsors for the "Ningning ng Parulan" are United Coconut Planters Bank, Real Bank, Ulanday Contractors and AGL Market Research Inc.

FORD F-150 SUPERCREW

Intimidating yet domesticated 'testosterone booster'

BY RAYMOND B. TRIBDINO,
Contributor
AND TESSA R. SALAZAR

INTIMIDATING is how Ford wants its new F-150 SuperCrew to be described. And fitting a description as it is; with its gaping flat black mesh grille producing a vicious snarl that shouts "get out of my way," the F-150 is really a genteel and domesticated automobile.

Four doors, a truly spacious full passenger compartment, a huge cargo hold and various many little conveniences give it away. We discovered that it is not an intimidator at all; in the manner Ford wants to project it. It is a very civilized, well-bred, full-size pickup. Its limousine-like road manners hide its 4x4 abilities. While its hushed V8 silences the grunt that will scare the wits out of anyone willing to test the limits of what lies under hood.

For this test-drive, we let the ladies decide whether the SuperCrew is indeed "the Intimidator."

We want it big!

Raymond: You take the floor, Tessa.

Tessa: I don't necessarily agree with the subhead "We want it big" for practical reasons. But I guess being big has its advantages. And for this mammoth Supercrew, the huge seating capacity is its crowning glory. For Pinoy-sized passengers, I did a record of hitching six people at the back, two of them six footers, three are of average size. Take note, these are just back passengers. I got two more passengers on the front.

Ludi T.: It is as wide as the road in our subdivision and seems terribly difficult to park. How long is it? About 20 feet? Why, that is longer than our driveway. No wonder you have to park the half of the car outside the garage.

Raymond: Ford should sponsor the rebuilding of all parking spaces to fit the SuperCrew in. I tried to find a suitable space for it at the Powerplant parking lot and it was hopeless. What is needed is a pier-and-dock not a parking slot.

Tessa: Well, you're barking up the wrong tree there, partner. Powerplant, with its elitist image, should have considered the gargantuan vehicles of the rich and the famous frequenting their place before they constructed their parking lot's layout. But then again, what's new?

FORD F-150 SuperCrew

We always find ourselves tongue lashing huge vehicles with our third world sized highways.

Raymond: Seriously though, the SuperCrew's overall length is exactly 5,745 mm or 22.6 feet from chrome bumper tip to chrome bumper tip. It's 2,029 mm or 7.9 feet wide, which is the half the width of regular Manila streets. And you need to make a really energetic hop to get on board. It clears the pavement at almost two feet.

Cynthia G. (*enterpreneur*): What do you mean big? This thing is enormous. There is space for one more seat in the middle and even if you cram four people in the back, you still have space to squirm your shoulders. I imagine you can put a jet ski in the back?

Raymond: Question is, is it intimidating? Will it scare you silly when you see those huge headlamps filling up your side mirrors.

Tessa: Honestly, I wouldn't be scared. But if it begins tailgating me, and I'm test-driving a tricycle on a slow lane, it would surely scare the hell out of me.

Kim H. (*art director*): Not me. Because it is expensive only rich people and politicians can afford it. If I see a vanity plate or a number 8 license plate bolted on a SuperCrew I'd brake suddenly to show my disgust if one of those things try to push me off the road. But if I am behind the wheel of one, then I'd take on anything the road can dish out.

Testosterone booster

Raymond: Being the only male in this bunch, I should say that the SuperCrew is one hell of an adrenaline rush with a testosterone boost on the side. If you put a premium on image, this is one car that'll definitely make even me look handsome, heh...heh...

Annette B. (*advertising manager*): You mean it is another male ego trip?

Raymond: That statement is not gender-sensitive.

Tessa: Handsome is a relative word, Raymond. For your wife Ludi, you're the most handsome guy on earth—with or without a Supercrew in tow.

Annette B.: I don't see why the SuperCrew should be positioned as an "intimidating" vehicle. It isn't! There is a lot of practical stuff in it. To me intimidating is something as useless as a Porsche, which is obviously an upshot to the male ego. I like the SuperCrew for what it is.

Kim H.: Yeah it's big and long, like some other thing women like in men.

Tessa: Hey, go easy ladies.

Shift on the fly and other stories

Raymond: Let's pretend we did not hear that last comment, OK?

Kim H.: But it is true. In this materialistic world, men are measured in inches, the more the better. Thus the SuperCrew is an expression of this fact. Big, wide and long, just like how some girls like it.

Jaymee S.: (*student, drives her dad's XLT 4x2*) I noticed the roomier back seat and of course the full size doors. How longer is it? Twelve inches? That's a lot of space. I love the 60/40-split rear bench seat that has those flat boards that cover it when folded. Hmmm...probably a nice place to make out, huh?

Raymond: Again, let's pretend we did not read that. I converted that space into a bunk with mattresses and pillows during a trip with my family. That was a lot of fun for the kids.

That's the kind of wholesome activity I'd like to do with the Super Crew.

Annette B.: Driving it wasn't so hard. I discovered that other cars would keep out of the way when they see you coming—maybe that is why Ford calls it an intimidator. But parking it is hell!

Raymond: We drove the Super Crew everywhere, including a 22-kilometer off-road trip to Lipa via the unfinished San Pablo-Lipa access road. Comfortably and in style. Though the long trips thinned my wallet down by about P3,000 for two full tanks of fuel.

Tessa: I drove the Supercrew on my way to Cavite and I'm not surprised at all that it is driver-friendly. I guess huge vehicles are built that way. I just noticed that it's got a sensitive honk, potential for hot-headed road ragers. There's cruise control—which I did try briefly because traffic's really bad. The CD changer I find comfortably located and within easy reach of these diminutive arms of mine. Six cup-holders neatly designed.

Raymond: The cargo box is about 5 and a half feet long box but an optional Bed Extender (popularized by the Sportrac) creates a total of 7 feet of carrying capacity. Sadly, the payload is only over 700 kilos, not much if you consider that the 4.6-liter engine can blurt out 398 Nm maximum torque. And can everyone stop ganging up on me?

In conclusion

Ford's new 2001-model Ford F-150 SuperCrew is the only pickup in its class offering four full-size doors and a full rear passenger compartment. It is also the only one in the market with power adjustable pedals, moon roof and shift on the fly 4x4. These are very strong indications of how Ford values feature-packing their vehicles, a practice that has become evident throughout the product lineup.

And the four-door, four-wheel drive formula is a winner. The SuperCrew is the first vehicle we rated that received a near perfect score—**9.5 points from a total of 10.** Forget fuel economy, if you can buy the SuperCrew it is assumed you can quench its thirst. Forget difficulty of parking, wanting "big" means living with the consequences of "big." Forget the P1.61 million price tag for the two-tone variant, it is money well spent. Ford guarantees that.

An award is no guarantee

ON THE ROAD
Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

CAR manufacturers spend hundreds of millions of pesos for marketing and sales promotions. But do you notice that in their advertisements highlighting the allegedly superior specs and performance of their products, nothing is said about the after-sales service their dealers provide?

Maybe it's because more often than not, the after-sales service of car dealers does not measure up to the standard of quality of the car itself. The car manufacturer may provide technical training for the dealer's service department manager, supervisors, mechanics or electricians at its assembly plant here or abroad, but there is no way it can guarantee efficient and honest service from its authorized dealers to customers. The car manufacturer can't be monitoring all its dealers' service department operations all the time. It can only apply moral suasion or offer incentives. As an incentive, the car manufacturer can conduct annual technical skills contests among the service department employees of its dealers or award a "Service Department of the Year" prize to the deserving dealer.

However, a dealer's winning the "Service Department of the Year" award is no guarantee of efficient and honest service, either. Take, for example, Toyota Pasong Tamo Inc., which won Toyota Motor Philippines Corporation's (TMPC) "Service Department of the Year" award in 1999. A customer who had acquired her Toyota vehicle there in 1997 always brought the car back for its scheduled maintenance checkups because she felt reassured by the dealer's service award.

Last month, reality finally caught up with her—the reality that the award-winning Toyota Pasong Tamo's service department has become sloppy. This was proven when they checked off as "done" the service advisor's instruction on the job order to inspect the air pressure of all four tires although they had not done so. After this first attempt to deceive the customer, they ostensibly carried out the instruction and then reassured her that they had replaced the left front tire's valve stem because it was defective.

That was Deception No. 2: the same left front tire suddenly went flat two days later (the car was not used the day after it was serviced due to the "color-coding" car ban.) When the flat tire was inspected at a vulcanizing shop, no nail or sharp puncturing object was found—only a fast-leaking, defective valve stem. Informed by the customer about the suddenly collapsed tire, Toyota Pasong Tamo's assistant general manager insisted that the tire valve stem had been replaced, but perhaps the new one was also defective. In her letter of complaint to TMPC's president, the customer wrote: "Unbelievable—an award-winning Toyota dealer procuring defective replacement parts and such a basic, low-tech, simple part as a tire valve stem at that!"

TMPC's public affairs manager, after reading his copy of the letter of complaint, apologized to the customer and promised to investigate the incident so that it won't happen again. But even if he reports back to the customer the results of his investigation, the damage has been done irrevocably.

Sloppy work and deceitfulness are by no means confined to this Toyota dealer. The service department of a competing car marque's Pasig dealer did the same thing: checked off as "done" the instruction to rotate a customer's tires although it wasn't done at all. I'm sure that similar attempts to dupe customers have taken place at the dealerships of other car manufacturers.

Unfortunately, the cards are stacked against the customer when he brings his car to the dealer for repair or maintenance service. The customer is not allowed to enter the service area so he cannot see what is being done to his car. For all he knows, service trainees are using his car as a guinea pig. When the invoice is presented to the customer, he is told to sign it to indicate his approval or satisfaction with the work that has been done on his car, although he cannot inspect his car until after he has paid the bill.

But the victim of slipshod service can fight back by promptly lodging a complaint with top management and following it up with phone calls. If nothing is done to address the customer's grievance, he can bring it to the attention of the media and spread the word that this particular car dealer and/or manufacturer doesn't care once it has made a sale. If still nothing happens, file a complaint with the Department of Trade and Industry's Bureau of Domestic Trade. The important thing is to fight for your right to value for money.

* * *

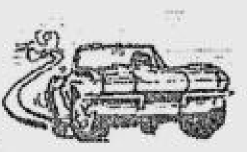
TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Any friend of yours is a friend of yours.

* * *

E-mail comments to aida_sevilla @pacific.net.ph

Time to rehabilitate Kennon Road

FULL TANK
Al S. Mendoza



EVERY time I go up to Baguio, I see road repairs at the Kennon Road. It happened again last week. I went to cover the 52nd Fil-Am Golf Championship and, along the way, I counted no less than six ongoing repairs done on the nation's most famous zigzag.

Has it become a habit?

Our government officials never cease to amaze me.

Do they really do it piecemeal? I mean, why don't they make lasting repairs at Kennon Road? Isn't it bad enough that we see pot holes all over? Why, each time a typhoon strikes, or just a flash downpour occurs, erosions virtually reduce many portions of Kennon to precarious precipices.

* * *

Seemingly, this government really doesn't study its priorities well. Oftentimes, it directs its efforts more on trivialities than on the pressing need to rehabilitate a national monument that has an enduring legacy like the Kennon Road.

Seemingly, people's welfare always takes the back seat in this country. As Percy Della, visiting Baguio for the first time in 28 years after spending 25 years in America, has said it last week on his way to Baguio via Kennon: "They don't give a hoot about it at all? They just leave Kennon to rot like an apple tossed into a waste can? C'mon, Al, write about it."

I've done it a lot of times already, buddy. Unfortunately, my efforts had fallen on deaf ears.

* * *

The Kennon Road is a national patrimony. Its history is replete with drama. In the early 1900s, both Filipinos and Americans (the Japanese joined them later) offered their lives constructing it. The Americans could not have built the City of Pines, the nation's summer capital, without the Kennon Road getting constructed first.

So, on the issue of how important Kennon is to the Filipinos, nothing beats its significance even in world history. One can take Kennon on his way to the Banawe Rice Terraces, one of the seven wonders of the world.

If there's one good thing about this government, it is that it has not, through the years, adopted the lunatic idea of demolishing it altogether.

* * *

What to do then to Kennon Road.

My suggestion—as has been my suggestion years ago—is for the government to really rehabilitate it.

Blast the mountains and build long-lasting mountain walls that should fight erosions.

Pierce the mountains and create tunnels. Tunnels are more durable than mountainside roads.

If I were mayor of Baguio I would link up with my fellow officials in drafting a serious blueprint to restore the splendor of Kennon.

So that when Percy Della, a brilliant sportswriter who is due to fly home to Sacramento, California, on Saturday on board Philippine Air Lines, comes back for another visit 25 years from now, he'll finally savor a zigzag restored to world class savvy.

* * *

I was happy to take the Urdaneta route on my way to Baguio and back. Happy because, for one, I was able to notice a lot of changes in that stretch between Carmen, Rosales, and Sison, Pangasinan. The highway is now lined with many establishments that even barangays appear like Class A towns. For another, I discovered that the road to Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija, from Paniqui and Moncada (Tarlac) is now asphalted/cemented.

But wait. How come there are so many humps along the highway from McArthur going to Cuyapo? Instead of a smooth ride over once was sand and gravel road, the trip is jolted at times by these humps. The unnecessary braking is irritating and delays the trip.

Some are in places before and after a school—obviously to force a vehicle to slow down to avoid hitting schoolchildren.

But then, aren't "school zone, slow down" signs more appropriate than humps?

I have yet to see humps in highways even in the most God-forsaken places in Mindanao.

* * *

Oh, yes, kudos to Governor Agbayani of Pangasinan. I can see that he has finally ordered the construction of the Aloragat Bridge in Binalonan full-blast.

Better late than never.

* * *

Who said I'm not attending Mitsubishi Motors Philippines' party tomorrow?

One of the nation's personalities in the motoring industry that I admire and respect is Mel Dizon, the Mitsubishi executive whose principles are beyond question. It is only during their party that I can spend some time on shop talk with Mel.

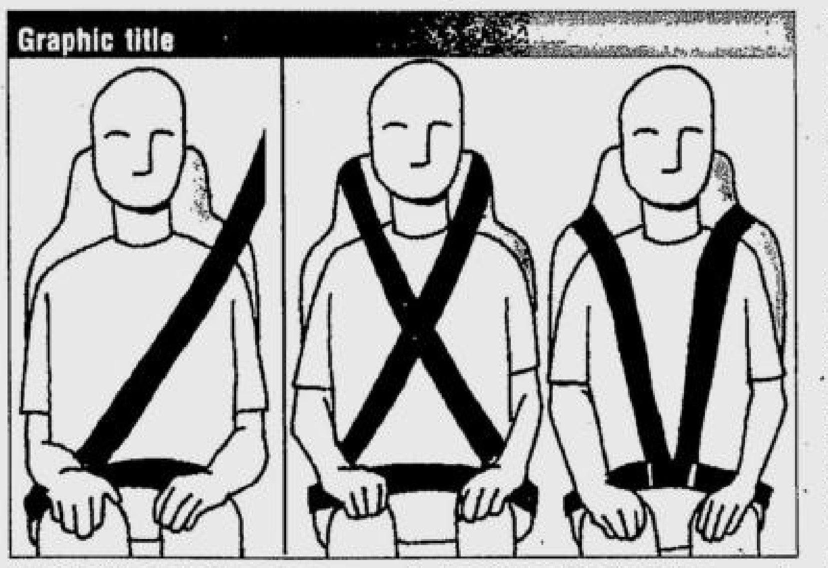
And, of course, 'tis also the season to renew ties with Mitsubishi's other great persons—Thelma Lozano, Froi Dytiangquin and Ding Benitez.

* * *

QUOTE ME. Avoid overtaking in tight situations when the road's in bad shape. Risky.

Seatbelt: an enduring auto innovation

BY CHARLES E. BUBAN



A. 3-point seatbelt system

B. 4-point seatbelt system

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

NAME one auto device that is synonymous to safety and the seatbelt (three-point safety belt) easily comes to mind. Invented over 40 years ago, the seatbelt continues to be one of the most crucial devices in protecting human life inside any modern automobile.

Thousands of the people who die in car crashes each year might still be alive if they had been wearing their seatbelts. There's no reason one shouldn't wear one: It's easy to install and the device has proven itself many times in saving life or reducing the risk of a serious injury in the event of a crash.

Stopping suddenly imposes a great deal of force on all objects in the vehicle, including its passengers. During a crash, a seatbelt distributes the forces of rapid deceleration over larger and stronger parts of the body such as the chest, hips and shoulders.

Car crash experts say that without a seatbelt, the occupant will continue to move forward in a frontal impact until brought to a stop by an object such as a windscreen, steering wheel, dashboard or front seat. In the most serious accidents, an unrestrained occupant will probably be killed instantly. In some cases, an unbuckled occupant may become projectile that can cause injury to other occupants should they collide with them.

Being thrown from the vehicle is usually equally calamitous. In a rollover, an unrestrained occupant who is thrown out of the vehicle is likely to be crushed. In a frontal impact, occupants propelled from the car will be injured both by passage through the windscreen and on impact with the ground or other solid object.

Seatbelts play other safety roles. It helps belted drivers maintain control of the car by keeping them in the driver's seat. This increases the chance of preventing a second crash.

An airbag is a supplementary restraint that works in combination with a safety belt to protect an occupant in a frontal crash. Airbags alone won't save a driver or his passengers. Airbags can cause injuries or even death when people hit them at the time of deployment. Experts advise that one should sit at least 10 inches away from where the airbag is stored. Young children who are riding in child safety seats or older children who are riding in booster seats should ride in the back seat, furthest away from an airbag. This is why children age 12 and under should always be properly buckled up in the back seat.

Front seat driver and passenger side airbags only work in frontal crashes, so if the vehicle is hit on the side or rolls over, the airbag will not protect those passengers not wearing a seatbelt.

Proper use

The proper way to wear the three-point safety belt is to adjust the lap portion of the belt across the hips. It should never be worn across the belly since the belt could cause serious abdominal injury in the event of a crash.

On the other hand, the shoulder portion of the belt should cross the chest and collarbone, never at the front of the face or placed behind the back, experts warn. A properly worn seatbelt is when you can sit with your back against the vehicle seat back cushion, with knees bent over the vehicle seat edge and feet on the floor.

Parents may be tempted to put their babies in the front seat where they're easier to see. However, parents are advised to put their smaller or newborn children in the back seat of the vehicle in a rear facing safety seats. The safety seat should be firmly fastened in place and shouldn't slide from side to side. Make sure the safety seat's straps are all in place. US experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say this is the safest position possible for two reasons: an infant can be seriously injured or killed by an inflating airbag and, the driver is less likely to be distracted while trying to care for the baby.

The only exception to putting infants in the back seat is if the vehicle does not have a back seat or if you can deactivate the passenger airbag.

For kids who have outgrown their safety seats, but who should not be in adult seatbelts either, must use booster seats. Without a booster, seatbelts can fail to keep small children in place, increasing their chances of being thrown off the car. In other cases, the seatbelt can cut into their necks or abdomens and cause severe injuries.

The booster lifts children up so that the seatbelt's shoulder portion properly falls across their collarbone and chest, instead of rubbing against their neck. The lap portion of the belt should ride below the hips and never across the stomach.

Seatbelt improvements

When Nils Bohlin first invented the seatbelt (and patented by Volvo in 1959), the three-point seatbelt was viewed with skepticism by both the automobile industry and the public. It was only in 1968 that US legislators began to recognize the safety of the seatbelt—after persistent lobbying of Volvo using data acquired from vehicle accidents involving cars equipped with the safety device.

From then on, the three-point seatbelt has stood the test of time becoming a regular fixture in every automobile. In fact, little has changed from Bohlin's original design. The inertia reel was added by Volvo in 1968. This addition allowed greater comfort and freedom of movement when wearing the seatbelt while eliminating the need to readjust the belt's size for different users; Subsequent improvements later on included the tensioners that eliminate slack when the belt is tightened; force limiters that control the forces needed to restrain the user; and simpler and more effective buckles.

Recently, Volvo is again experimenting with the next evolution in seatbelt. Called the four-point safety belts, it comes in two forms: a crossover harness (X4 CrissCross) and a brace-type system (Center Buckle V4). The X4 CrissCross is essentially a three-point safety belt with the addition of a retractable diagonal chestbelt; when in place, the additional belt forms an "X" across the chest while the Center Buckle V4 setup is similar to the five-point harness used in race cars, less the lower-front strap; it forms a "V" across the chest when in use.

Indeed, seatbelts may change, but it's reassuring to know that they are evolving for the better.

Isuzu extends 0-interest, easy-payment terms for Hi-lander Crosswind

IN TIME for the holiday season, Isuzu gives buyers more reason to have a merry Christmas by extending its value-for-money deals until Dec. 20.

Get 0 percent monthly interest with the Crosswind XTO A/T for a 50 percent down payment. An initial cash outlay of P386,500 (from sales price of P773,000) would give buyers a no-interest premium on their monthly installments on a 12 or 18 months term. Also for the XTO M/T is a zero interest plan for a 50 percent down payment of P366,500 (from sales price of P733,000), on a 12-month paying term.

Likewise, buyers are given a low down payment option so they can own a Crosswind at a minimum cash outlay. Get the Crosswind XTO A/T at a low 20 percent down payment of P106,660. Down payment for an XTO M/T, on the other hand, is pegged at P108,660, 20 percent of its selling price. Buyers can also get a Crosswind XT model for as low as P114,000 down payment, 20 percent of its P670,000 selling price.

Big discounts also await all cash buyers. A whopping P48,000 price off is tagged with the Crosswind XTO A/T. This allows buyers to get an XTO automatic for a low P725,000. At the same time, the XTO M/T is pegged at P695,00, a sizeable P38,000 cash discount.

Due to positive reception and insistent demand for the all-new Crosswind Special Edition, all value deals are extended for this upbeat and classy model bearing the fresh and hip chameleon pearl green color. Creating waves recently with its pearl finish being the first and only in its class, the Crosswind Special Edition comes with black leather seats cum green stitching plus green seatbelts to go with its body tone. This Special Edition comes in A/T and M/T with selling price of P799,000 and P759,000, respectively.

MOTORING

CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor

FORD JOURNALISM AWARDS

Inquirer wins best auto innovation story

BY RAYMOND B. TRIBDINO
Contributor

THE INQUIRER'S Tessa Salazar bagged one of the six awards at the 1st Henry Ford Journalism Awards held recently at the Filipinas Heritage Library Courtyard.

Salazar won in the Best Auto Innovation/Auto Event Story category with her entry "Get rid of that blind spot for safe driving."

The article, which won by a wide margin over other entries was described as an "interesting piece" focusing on new techniques of driving. In the article, Salazar describes in detail an innovative way of fixing the car's side mirrors to eliminate the unsafe blindspot beside and directly behind a vehicle.

Five other motoring journalists received awards including Manny de los Reyes for his "Driving Ford's Think Car" in the Best Ford feature category. The Philippine Star's motoring editor Junep Ocampo won two awards; one for his 4-part piece on lemon cars called "To Refund or not to Refund"; in the Best Auto Industry story and the other for Best Newspaper Photo for the article "Women of Ford."

In the category Best Photo for magazine, REV editor in chief Vernon Sarne took home the trophy for his photo showing Ford's Dave Gutman test-driving the Toyota Corolla Altis. Drive.com's Eric Soriano bagged the Best Online feature story award for his "49 kilometers per liter," which was a narrative of the Civic Eco-Challenge and the fuel efficiency of Honda's new VTEC engine.

Auto Review's Ron de los Reyes TV feature on the F-150 SuperCrew won the Best Auto TV feature.

"Screening and choosing the winners was a tough task for the judges because of the quality of the entries," says Maricar Parco, Ford's assistant vice president for public affairs. "But we are confident that the awardees constitute the best this year."

Ford president Terry Emrick hailed the success of the 1st Henry Ford Journalism Awards, calling the winners "automotive journalism's finest."

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Continued next week

DUE to space constraints, the last part of the story titled "Aggressive driving observed among metro college students" will appear next week.

Aspiring lady mechanics do the 'dirty work'

TEXT AND PHOTOS
BY TESSA R. SALAZAR

NO, they are not your everyday grease men at your neighborhood *talyer* (automotive shop). In fact, they're not even men.

They are women 17 to 50 years old, and a bit like our incumbent President, they do the dirty work themselves. But unlike the President, these lady auto mechanics-to-be do the often unglamorous task of going under the hood, learning the basics of engine tuning, component overhauling, timing and more. These women started from zero knowledge to become nearly full-fledged automotive mechanics.

Rosabelle Castillo, 19, Fely Ramao, 35, Jennifer Quinior, 18, Daisy Reyes, 24, Nina Lacia, 19, Rowena Dionglay, 28 and Janic Pacapa, 24 are part of the seventh batch of women taking up automotive mechanics. They dream of putting up and owning an automotive shop someday to help their families get through with everyday living.

These women have availed themselves of free skills training at the Women's Center of the Technical Education and Skills Development Association (Tesda) in Taguig. The women's center has already trained seven batches of women for pre-employment and skills training for basic automotive mechanics.

TINKERING with a twin cam 16 valve engine

THE LADY mechanics at one of the high tech rooms at the TESDA Women's Center: the autotronics section.

The major aspect of the course is the study of automotive parts and functions, engine types, classification and operation and engine troubleshooting. Trainees are expected to have acquired competencies of a semiskilled automotive mechanic.

There are also advanced courses in autotronics control systems, for women automotive technologists who opt to go high-tech in their skills.

The upgrading, which would take 64 hours, is designed to provide knowledge and skills to troubleshoot the different electronics controllers of different automotive systems such as ignition, antilock braking and suspension. The course also covers electronic and sensor fundamentals and the use of personal computer as primary tool to control and diagnose simulated targets.

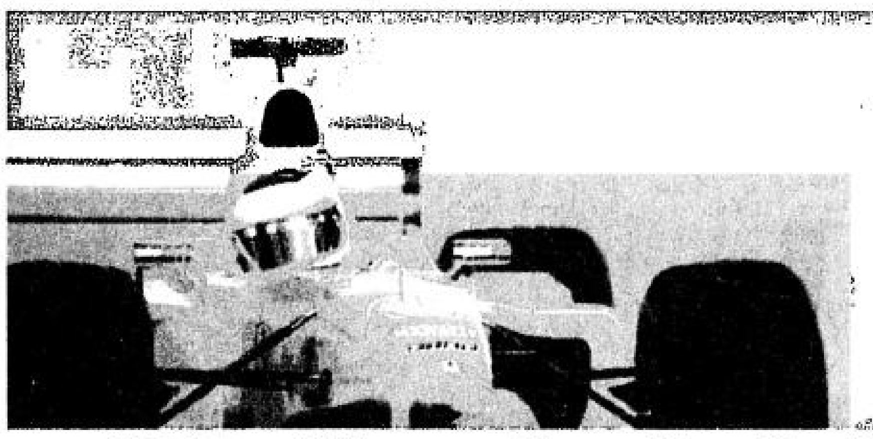
"Equal advantage and equal opportunities, if they train right. These women are also trained to put up their own businesses, that's why they are motivated to put up their own shops," said Jose S. Rojas, Tesda automotive consultant.

Rojas added that car owners should know how to maintain their vehicles well, regardless of their gender. Women professionals who drive should learn the basics of auto mechanics. Rojas said there were evening classes before for women professionals.

"The learning process takes time. You don't expect these women to become overnight super mechanics," said Tesda area manager for Land Transport Temerio A. Millena. Millena hopes that women mechanics wouldn't be discriminated against or underemployed in auto manufacturing plants so that their learning process would continue to grow.

The Tesda automotive training courses are also open for trainers—men and women, professionals, and out-of-school youths, according to Tesda automotive training assistant head Santiago B. Esquivel. Tesda also conducts regional training.

Tesda's Powertraining involves clutch assembly training; the automotive electrician course, gasoline engine mechanic course, diesel engine mechanic course, computerized gasoline engine specialist course; diesel fuel injection specialist course and vehicle maintenance course.



The Circuit

2001 - What a Year for Shell and Ferrari!

When the Formula1 Grand Prix season started in March of this year, F1 enthusiasts still had in their minds the fairly close 2000 race between Ferrari and McLaren. But in the 2001 season, it was plain dominance for the Shell-Ferrari team. For it was the season when the Shell-Ferrari partnership saw F1-history rewritten, and runaway winner Michael Schumacher break records.

During the first round of the season in Melbourne, Shell's fuels and lubricants with Ferrari's new car and Type 050 engine resulted in a victory and second place respectively for Schumi and teammate Rubens Barichello.

Ferrari immediately took the lead in the Constructor's Championship. With Shell's help, this lead would not be relinquished throughout the year. Similar successes were recorded in the Malaysian GP. With faultless one-two results in Monaco and a fine second-place finish for Michael in Canada, the Shell-Ferrari team led the Constructors' Championship by 34 points. And at the Driver's table, Michael Schumacher was 18 points clear of his nearest challenger.

Halfway through the season at Silverstone, the Shell-Ferrari partnership celebrated the 50th anniversary of its first championship win. And by September, at the Belgian Grand Prix, Shell went on to record its 200th Formula One race win. Likewise, at that same venue, Michael Schumacher broke Alain Prost's record of 51 wins.

The team then realized that winning the championship was a mathematical possibility in Hungary, and Shell developed a new fuel to bring to the Hungaroring to cap the dominance shown so far that season. And indeed, at the Hungarian Grand Prix, the Shell-Ferrari team celebrated their continued dominance as Michael took the flag. Only at round 13 of the season, the team already successfully defended the F1 World Constructor's Championship, and the Driver's World Championship. Michael's win also equaled Prost's record of 4 World Driver's Championship titles.

Michael then sped-on to take the Belgian GP, and capped the season with a spectacular win at the Japanese Grand Prix. During the season, Schumi notched a total of 801 points against Prost's record of 798.5, thereby taking the record for the most Driver's Championship points scored.

The season saw the Shell-Ferrari team scoring a total of 9 wins and 11 poles, while closest rival McLaren scored only 4 wins and 2 poles. The Shell-Ferrari teamwork again wrote history and established themselves as the most successful team and fuels and lubricants partner in the books of Formula One World Championships. And it is noteworthy that Shell's level of commitment to support the Ferrari team to break records and dominate, is the same level of commitment it gives its customers worldwide as they provide the best fuels and lubricants possible. (W.I.N.)

Relive the 2001 F1 season. Visit www.shell.com/ferrari. It's the closest you can get to exhilarating Formula One racing moments.

F1 2002 CALENDAR

AUSTRALIA	MARCH 3
MALAYSIA	MARCH 17
BRAZIL	MARCH 31
SAN MARINO	APRIL 14
SPAIN	APRIL 28
AUSTRIA	MAY 12
MONACO	MAY 26
CANADA	JUNE 9
EUROPA	JUNE 23
GREAT BRITAIN	JULY 7
FRANCE	JULY 21
GERMANY	JULY 28
HUNGARY	AUGUST 18
BELGIUM	SEPTEMBER 1
ITALY	SEPTEMBER 15
USA	SEPTEMBER 29
JAPAN	OCTOBER 13

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Tastes LIFESTYLE

CHELO BANAL-FORMOSO, Editor

GOURMET OPULENCE. Food from Terry Selection, plants from Mabolo

A quick guide to the best delicatessens in town

BY CATHY BABAO GUBALLA
PHOTOS BY MIKE ALQUINTO

Part I

IT'S only 12 days before Christmas and for those who still have to tick 101 names off their personal or corporate list, there is one gift that never fails to bring delight. Lifestyle went all over Metro Manila to come up with a quick guide to stand-alone gourmet delicatessens and the unique food items they carry. Much to our delight, there were delis big and small, ranging in ambiance from downright homey to very cosmopolitan, and their baskets of goodies range in price from P350 to P5,000 per.

BLUE BACON AND GREEN EGGS

No, they don't sell green eggs and ham, much less blue bacon, but this is a complete delicatessen that is a twin to

A QUICK/ p.C6

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ALL CENTERS ARE NOW OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK. Per DTI NCR Permit #4032, Series of 2001

MON. - FRI. (8 AM - 7 PM) / SAT. (8 AM - 5 PM) / SUN. (10 AM - 3 PM)

TIA MARIA'S
CHRISTMAS BUDGET MEAL PACKS

Pack 1
SPAGHETTI
CHOICE OF
QUESADILLAS (2 pcs.)
OR
MEXICAN PIZZA (2 slices)
BARBECUE (2 sticks)
ICED TEA
P 80.00

Pack 2
SPAGHETTI
CHOICE OF
QUESADILLAS (2 pcs.)
OR
MEXICAN PIZZA (2 slices)
CHICKEN AL AJILLO
ICED TEA
P 80.00

Pack 3
SOLO PIZZA (2 slices)
NACHO CHIPS
ICED TEA
P 75.00

Price inclusive of taxes. Exclusive of service charge.

PLEASE CALL ANY OF THE TIA MARIA'S OUTLETS FOR INQUIRIES

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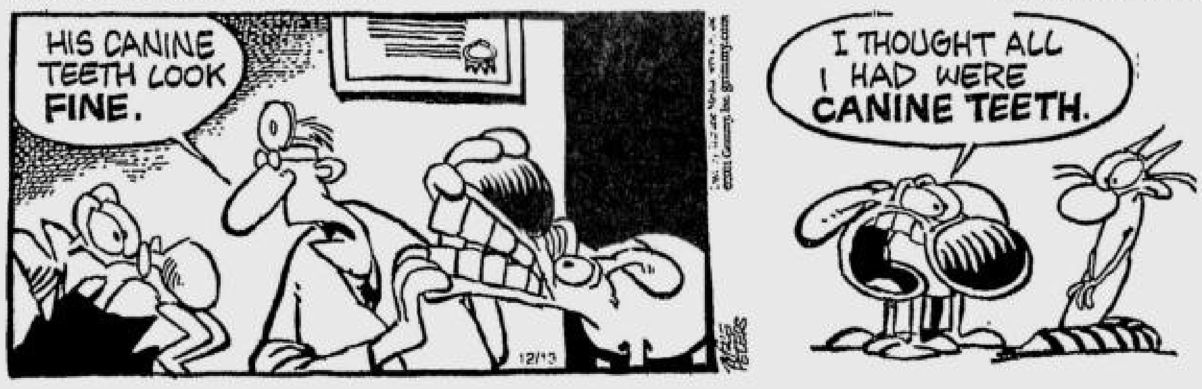
Tel. 890-4735	Tel. 371-1473	Tel. 635-2326	Tel. 522-0429

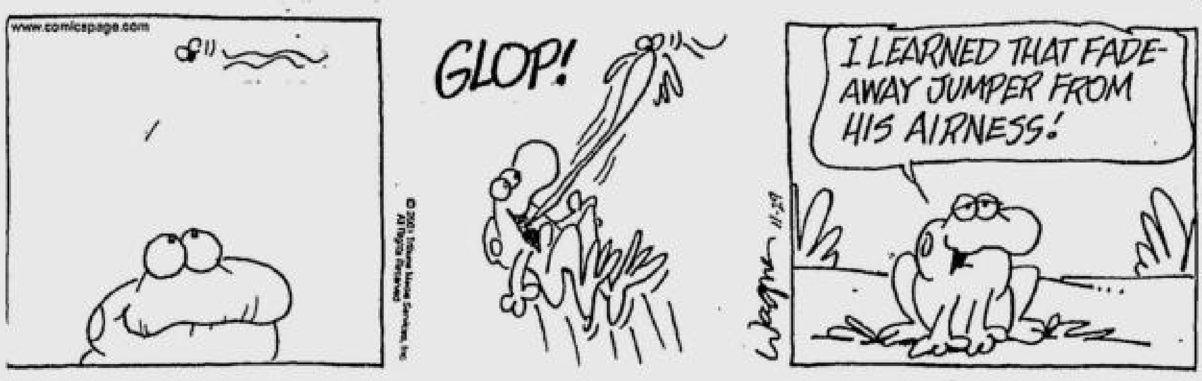
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


HIS CANINE TEETH LOOK FINE.
I THOUGHT ALL I HAD WERE CANINE TEETH.
12/13
MIKE PETERS

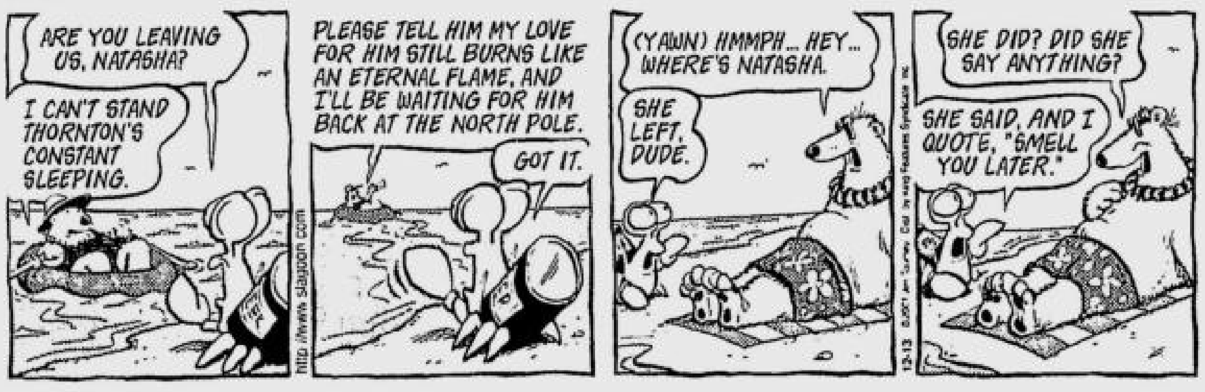
ANIMAL CRACKER

BY FRED WAGNER


www.comicspage.com
GLOP!
I LEARNED THAT FADE-AWAY JUMPER FROM HIS AIRNESS!
Wagner 11-29

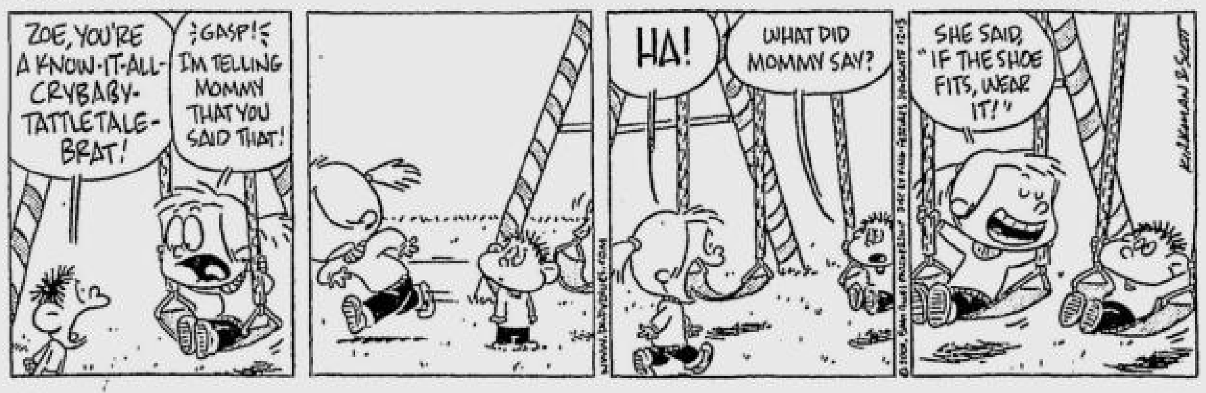
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


ARE YOU LEAVING US, NATASHA?
I CAN'T STAND THORNTON'S CONSTANT SLEEPING.
PLEASE TELL HIM MY LOVE FOR HIM STILL BURNS LIKE AN ETERNAL FLAME, AND I'LL BE WAITING FOR HIM BACK AT THE NORTH POLE.
GOT IT.
(YAWN) HMMPH... HEY... WHERE'S NATASHA.
SHE LEFT, DUDE.
SHE DID? DID SHE SAY ANYTHING?
SHE SAID, AND I QUOTE, "SMELL YOU LATER."
http://www.slagoon.com
12-13

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


ZOE, YOU'RE A KNOW-IT-ALL-CRYBABY-TATTLETALE-BRAT!
GASP! I'M TELLING MOMMY THAT YOU SAID THAT!
HA!
WHAT DID MOMMY SAY?
SHE SAID, "IF THE SHOE FITS, WEAR IT!"
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Christie Clark, Dick Van Dyke, John Davidson, Ted Nugent, Tome DeLonge, Jamie Foxx

Happy Birthday: This year romance will take your mind off everything else. Be careful that you don't get so involved in someone else's life that you relinquish your own. You'll be in a creative cycle and if you waste your time you're not likely to take advantage of the opportunities that surface. Keep an open mind and try to concentrate on being productive. If you follow your own dream you will hold the attention of your partner. Your numbers are 9, 13, 16, 22, 37, 44

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Greater involvement with sports groups will get your juices flowing. Get in shape before the New Year kicks in. Direct your energy into self-awareness and making yourself the best that you can be.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): It's time to get into the spirit of the season. You can turn your home into a winter wonderland with a little ingenuity. Use your creative talent rather than a lot of cash this year.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Your perspective will change if you listen to the words of wisdom that an older relative wishes to share with you. Don't let your emotions get in the way of accomplishing what you set out to do.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Money may be on your mind. You may have to move quickly if you want to get your finances in order before year-end. You can achieve positive gains through stable investments

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You may want to give the ones you love lavish gifts but financial limitations will hit if you don't curb your spending habits. Don't pay for friends just to impress them.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You will make poor choices today. Don't get involved in an unstable partnership. You will be disappointed if this person doesn't offer you as much in return. Expect to put in overtime

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Offer your time not your cash. Don't lend or borrow money or possessions. Be careful not to offend a friend unintentionally. You could easily blow a surprise for someone if you aren't careful

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Not everyone will be in the mood to work, but if you put your heart into what you are trying to accomplish you will get ahead professionally. You may want to make a complete change at the close of the year. Go after your dreams.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You will be in the mood to get out and enjoy yourself. Your love of life and adventure will lead you into interesting forms of entertainment. You must not shy away from trying new things.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You have control whether you know it or not. Play the game well and you will find yourself in a very good position. Keep secrets to yourself for now and take on any challenge that faces you with confidence.

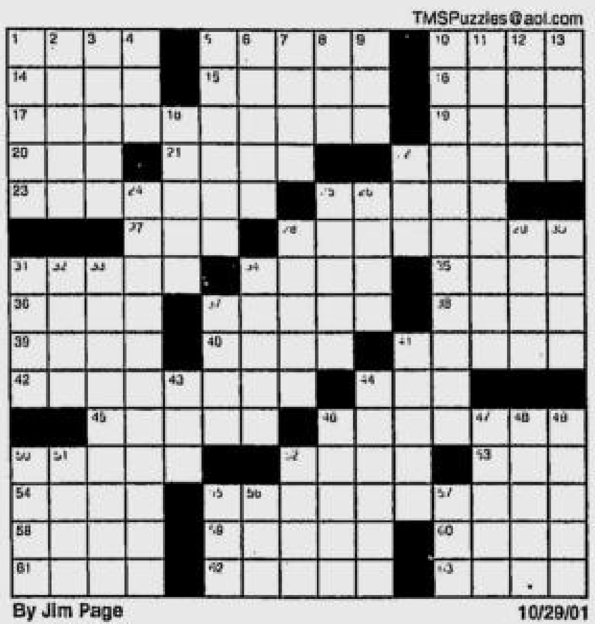
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): It's time to make your move. Your need to be in the middle of things will lead you to the forefront of an organization you believe in. You can gain respect and popularity if you speak up.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): The element of surprise will work best for you today. Don't divulge your intentions, instead just take the initiative and you will catch the attention of those in a position to influence your future. Go after your goals and don't look back.

Birthday Baby: You are quite the little achiever and make everything look so easy. You have charisma and a go-getter attitude that no one will deny. Defeat is not in your vocabulary. You always play to win.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Jim Page
New York, NY

10/29/01

ACROSS
1 Flames' surface
5 Minsk money
10 Singer Falana
14 Inter __
15 Close, poetically
16 Terrible czar?
17 Warm up for a workout
19 Gala
20 Chemical suffix
21 Copied
22 Spread here and there
23 Hounded
25 Shoulder wrap
27 "__ Be Seeing You"
28 Ancient period
31 Everett and Lowe
34 King of comedy
35 Pastoral poem
36 "Hurlyburly" playwright
37 Carry out
38 "American Gigolo" star
39 Med. sch. subj.
40 Small snakes
41 __ Penh
42 Sewer openings
44 Tailor's concern
45 Letter before epsilon
46 Alarm signals
50 Homemade brick
52 Dynamic leader?
53 Narcs' org.
54 Anderson of "WKRP..."
55 Wind up a workout
58 Long journey
59 De Mille of the dance
60 Cries of discovery
61 Marquis de __
62 Swayze film
63 Sacred

DOWN
1 Indian prince
2 Ms. Massey
3 Mall river
4 Bandleader Winding
5 Come down a cliff face
6 Lacking a guide
7 Droplet
8 "Hotel du __"
9 Poetic before
10 Pump iron
11 Burdened too heavily
12 Running behind
13 All over again
18 Man's talons
22 __ Jose, CA
24 Use an Exercycle
25 Does' mates
26 Make a point
28 Palm blows
29 Hero's cousin
30 Grade sch.
31 Study intensively
32 Mandlikova of tennis
33 Forsaken
34 Perplexed
37 Granular seasoning
41 Actress Molly
43 Catalonian cheer
44 Woodland
46 French heads
47 Sun Valley state
48 Himalayan kingdom
49 Smart-alecky
50 Contingencies: abbr.
51 Mrs. Copperfield
52 Part of A.D.
55 Waste cloth
56 Yuck!
57 __-de-dah

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

C	A	T	A	W	B	A	■	S	A	R	A	L	E	E
A	P	E	R	C	U	S	■	A	D	O	R	I	N	G
T	O	L	S	T	O	Y	■	T	O	S	T	A	D	A
A	L	E	■	U	N	O	S	■	■	T	I	N	E	D
M	O	C	K	■	O	U	T	S	P	R	E	A	D	S
A	G	A	N	A	■	L	A	U	R	A	■	■	■	■
R	I	S	E	R	■	I	T	S	Y	■	O	D	O	R
A	Z	T	E	C	■	K	I	T	■	O	N	I	C	E
N	E	S	S	■	M	E	S	A	■	Y	E	A	T	S
■	■	■	■	H	A	I	T	I	■	L	A	N	A	I
S	E	L	F	A	C	T	I	N	G	■	L	E	G	S
C	R	O	O	N	■	■	C	A	R	L	■	L	O	T
A	R	I	O	S	O	S	■	B	O	I	T	A	N	O
M	O	R	D	E	N	T	■	L	A	M	I	N	A	R
P	R	E	S	L	E	Y	■	E	N	A	M	E	L	S

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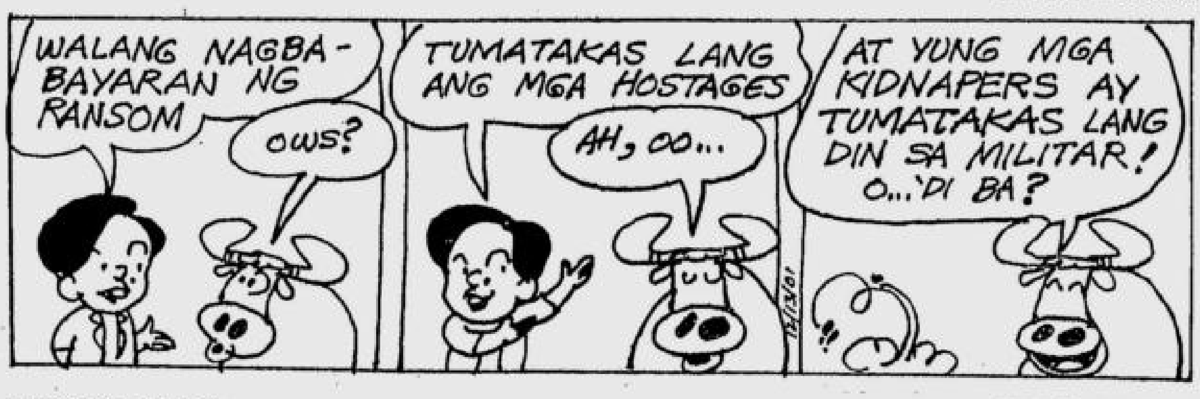
10/29/01

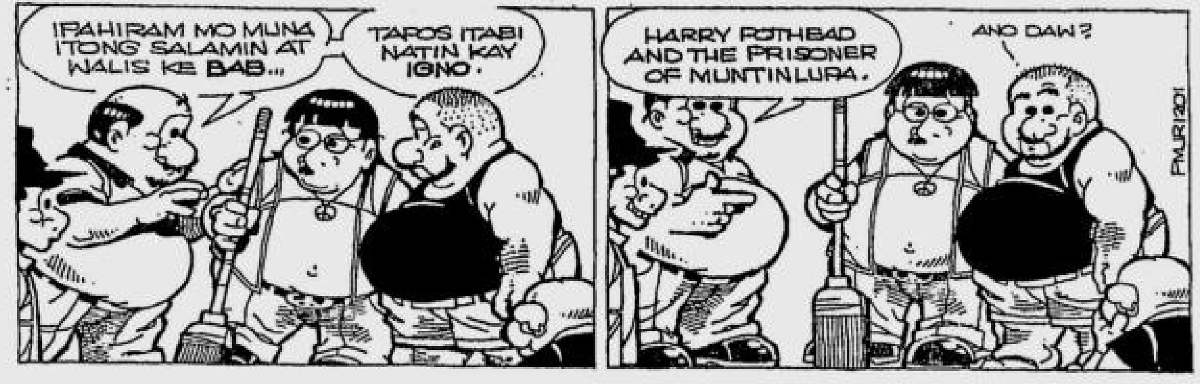
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


WALANG NAGBA-BAYARAN NG RANSOM
OWS?
TUMATAKAS LANG ANG MGA HOSTAGES
AH, OO...
AT YUNG MGA KIDNAPERS AY TUMATAKAS LANG DIN SA MILITAR! O...'DI BA?
12/13/01

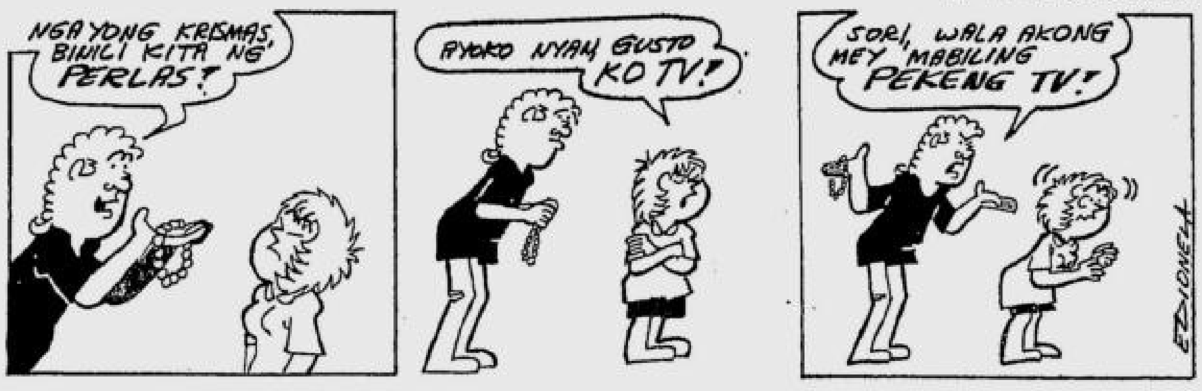
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


!PAHIRAM MO MUNA ITONG SALAMIN AT WALIS KE BAB...
TAPOS ITABI NATIN KAY IGNO.
HARRY POTHBAD AND THE PRISONER OF MUNTINLUPA.
ANO DAW?
PMJR1201

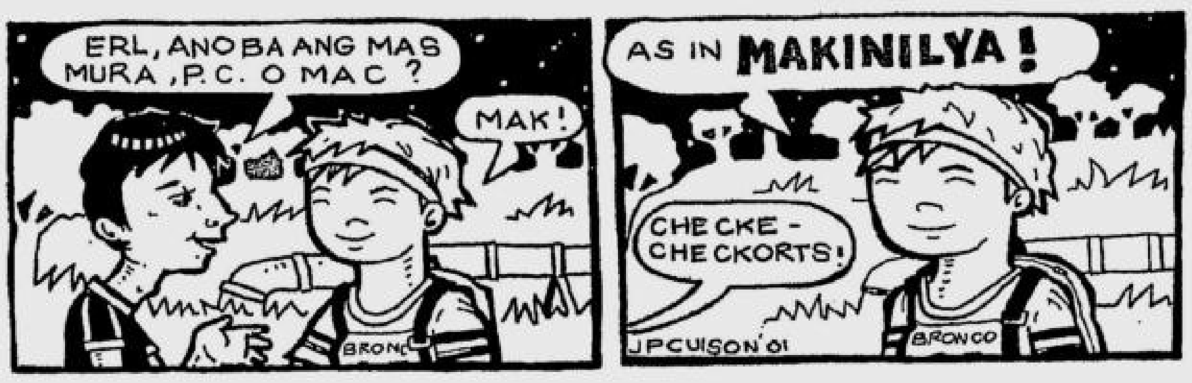
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


NGAYONG KRISMAS, BINILI KITA NG PERLAS!
AYOKO NYAN! GUSTO KO TV!
SORI, WALA AKONG MEY MABILING PEKENG TV!
EDIONELA

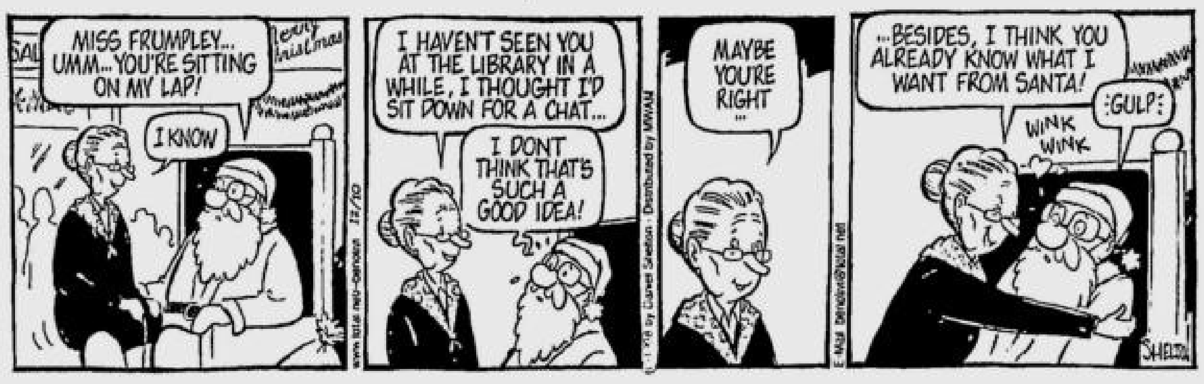
GARAPATA BLOOD

BY JOHN PAUL/BENG/MANIX


ERL, ANO BA ANG MAS MURA, P.C. O MAC?
MAK!
AS IN MAKINILYA!
CHECKE-CHECKORTS!
BRONCO
JPCUISON '01

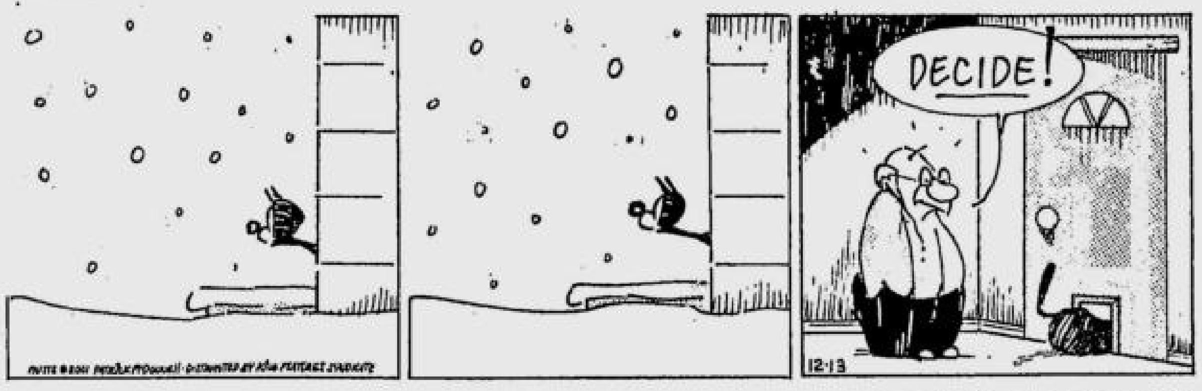
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


MISS FRUMPLEY... UMM...YOU'RE SITTING ON MY LAP!
I KNOW
Merry Christmas
I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU AT THE LIBRARY IN A WHILE, I THOUGHT I'D SIT DOWN FOR A CHAT...
I DONT THINK THAT'S SUCH A GOOD IDEA!
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT ...
...BESIDES, I THINK YOU ALREADY KNOW WHAT I WANT FROM SANTA!
WINK WINK
GULP
SHELTON

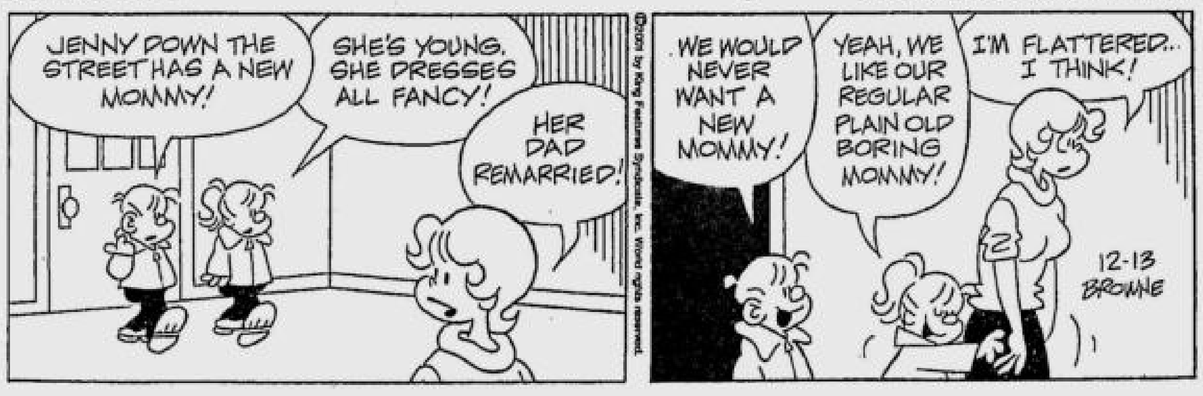
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


DECIDE!
12-13

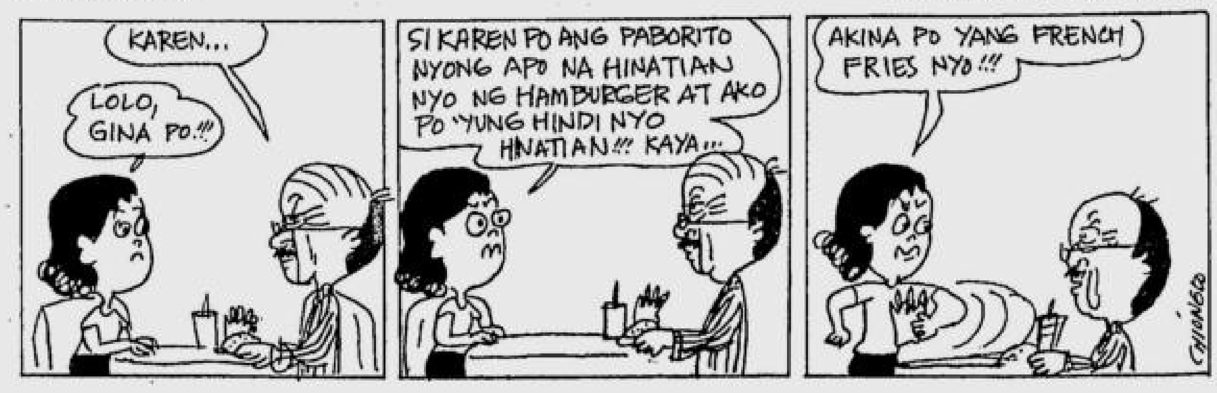
HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


JENNY DOWN THE STREET HAS A NEW MOMMY!
SHE'S YOUNG. SHE DRESSES ALL FANCY!
HER DAD REMARRIED!
WE WOULD NEVER WANT A NEW MOMMY!
YEAH, WE LIKE OUR REGULAR PLAIN OLD BORING MOMMY!
I'M FLATTERED.. I THINK!
12-13 BROWNE

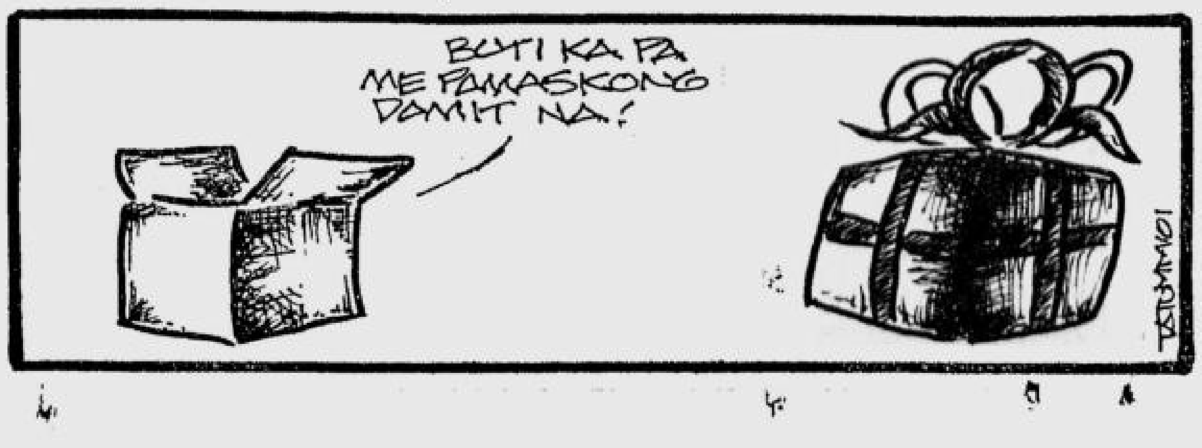
LOVEKNOTS

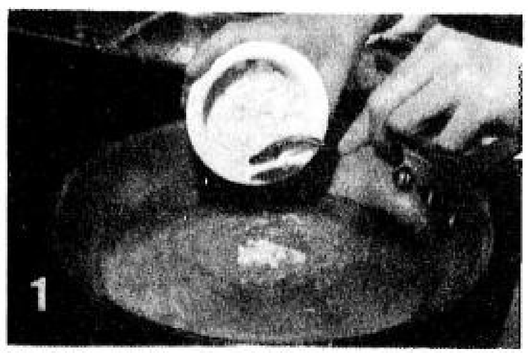
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


KAREN...
LOLO, GINA PO.!!!
SI KAREN PO ANG PABORITO NYONG APO NA HINATIAN NYO NG HAMBURGER AT AKO PO 'YUNG HINDI NYO HINATIAN!!! KAYA...
AKINA PO YANG FRENCH FRIES NYO!!!
CHIONGLO

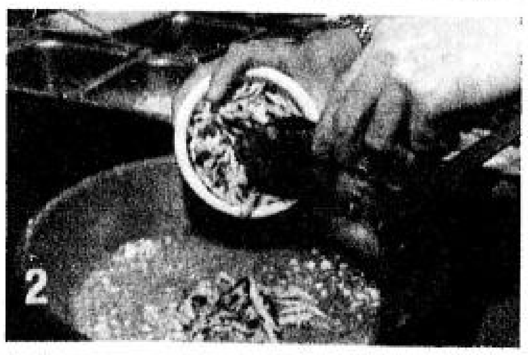
TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING

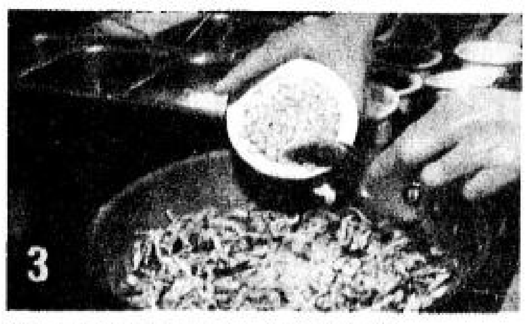

BUTI KA PA ME PAMASKONG DAMIT NA!
TATUM '01



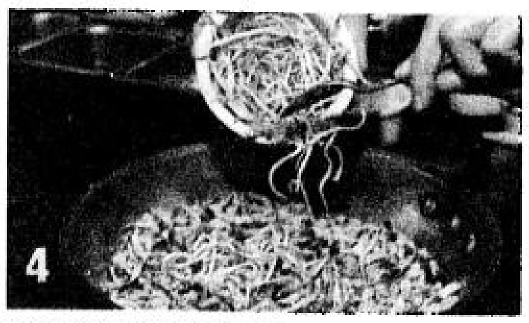
SAUTÉ garlic in olive oil.



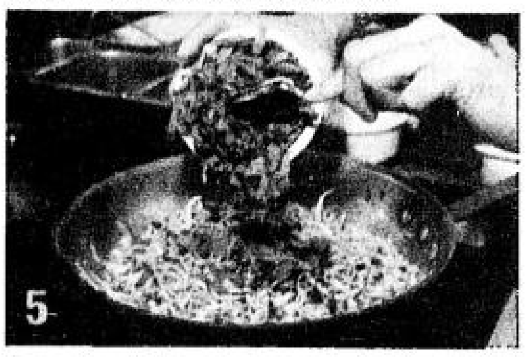
ADD chicken strips. Mix well.



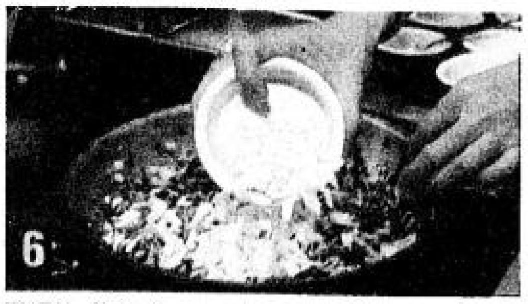
STIR in corn kernels. Blend well.



TOSS in the bean sprouts.



ADD spinach, cilantro, salt and pepper and paprika.



TURN off the heat and let it cool a bit before you add the Monterey Jack cheese and cheddar cheese so the cheese will not melt right away. Stir until well blended.

Prepare-ahead spring rolls

By Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Roger Carpio

FOR A HEALTHY holiday starter, Sta. Fe spring rolls will spell a big difference. Light and nutritious because they are veggie-packed, Sta. Fe spring rolls are a healthy approach to cooking delicious holiday dishes.

STEP-BY-STEP

Bean sprouts, spinach, corn kernel and chicken strips are securely wrapped in a tortilla or *lumpia* wrapper and dipped in a very light sauce. But, for times when you want to serve an entirely meatless meal, you can do away with chicken, or simply serve it on the side.

Albert Alavera, managing director of Burgoo Restaurant (tel. 898-1815 to 16), combines cheddar cheese and Monterey Jack cheese to create a tangy yet creamy taste. The melted cheese also helps hold the filling together. Monterey Jack cheese is a mild, moist cheddar made from skimmed milk. It's available at Santi's deli and Rustan's supermarkets.

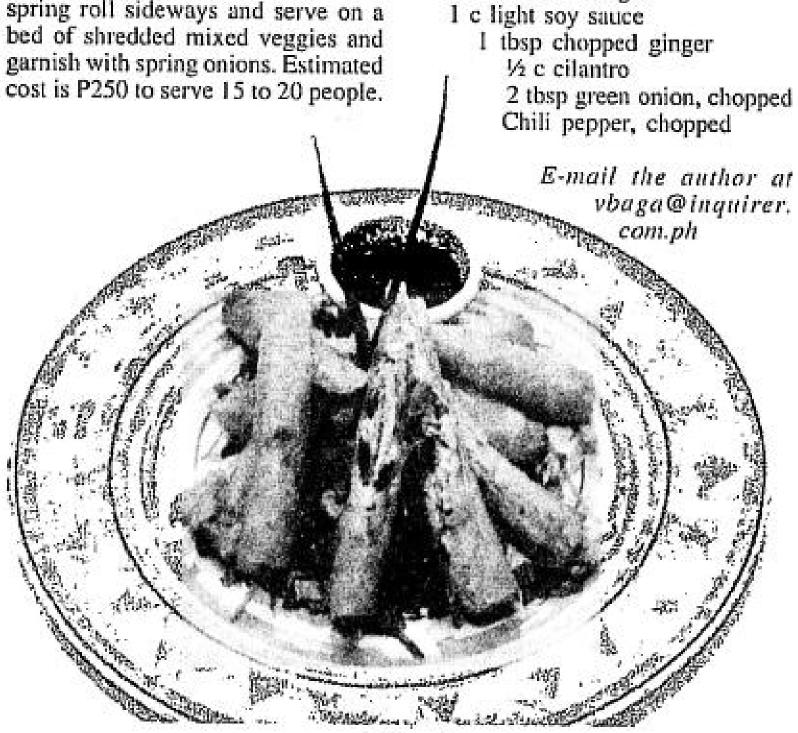
According to Alavera, it's best to store or chill uncooked spring rolls before frying them to "age" and "seal" the flavor. However, if you don't have the luxury of time, you may cook the spring rolls right after preparing them.

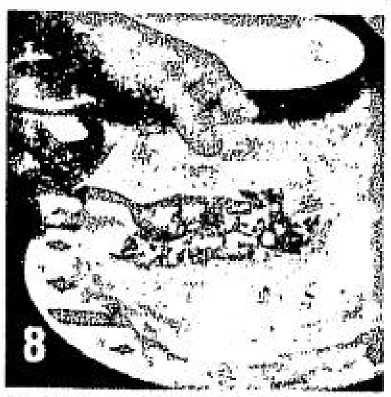
For aesthetic purposes, cut each spring roll sideways and serve on a bed of shredded mixed veggies and garnish with spring onions. Estimated cost is P250 to serve 15 to 20 people.

TRANSFER filling to a plate and let cool again for a few minutes.

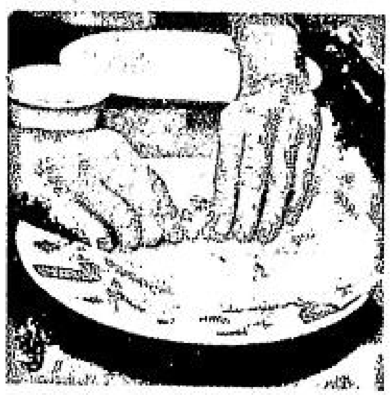
Ingredients:
20 g olive oil
1 tbsp garlic, minced
4 pc grilled chicken breast, cut into strips
1 c spinach, julienne
1 c long-stem bean sprouts
50 g cilantro, chopped
50 g Monterey Jack cheese, cubed
50 g cheddar cheese, cubed
10 g paprika
1 c corn kernel
1 tsp salt and pepper
Cooking oil for frying
20 pc tortilla or *lumpia* wrapper
For the sauce:
1 c distilled vinegar
1 c light soy sauce
1 tbsp chopped ginger
½ c cilantro
2 tbsp green onion, chopped
Chili pepper, chopped

E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

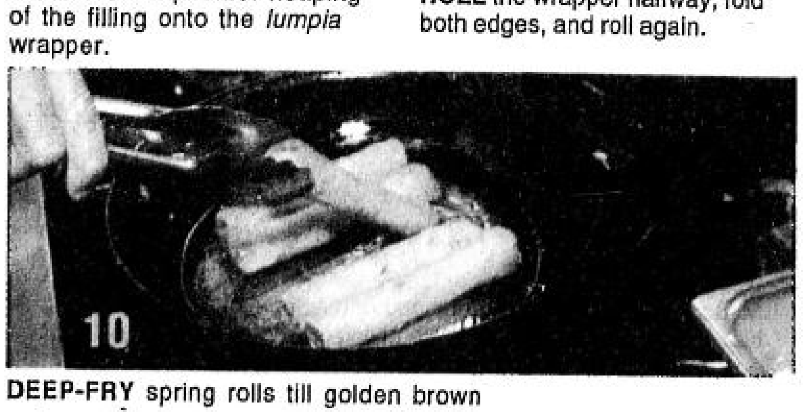




PLACE one spoonful heaping of the filling onto the *lumpia* wrapper.

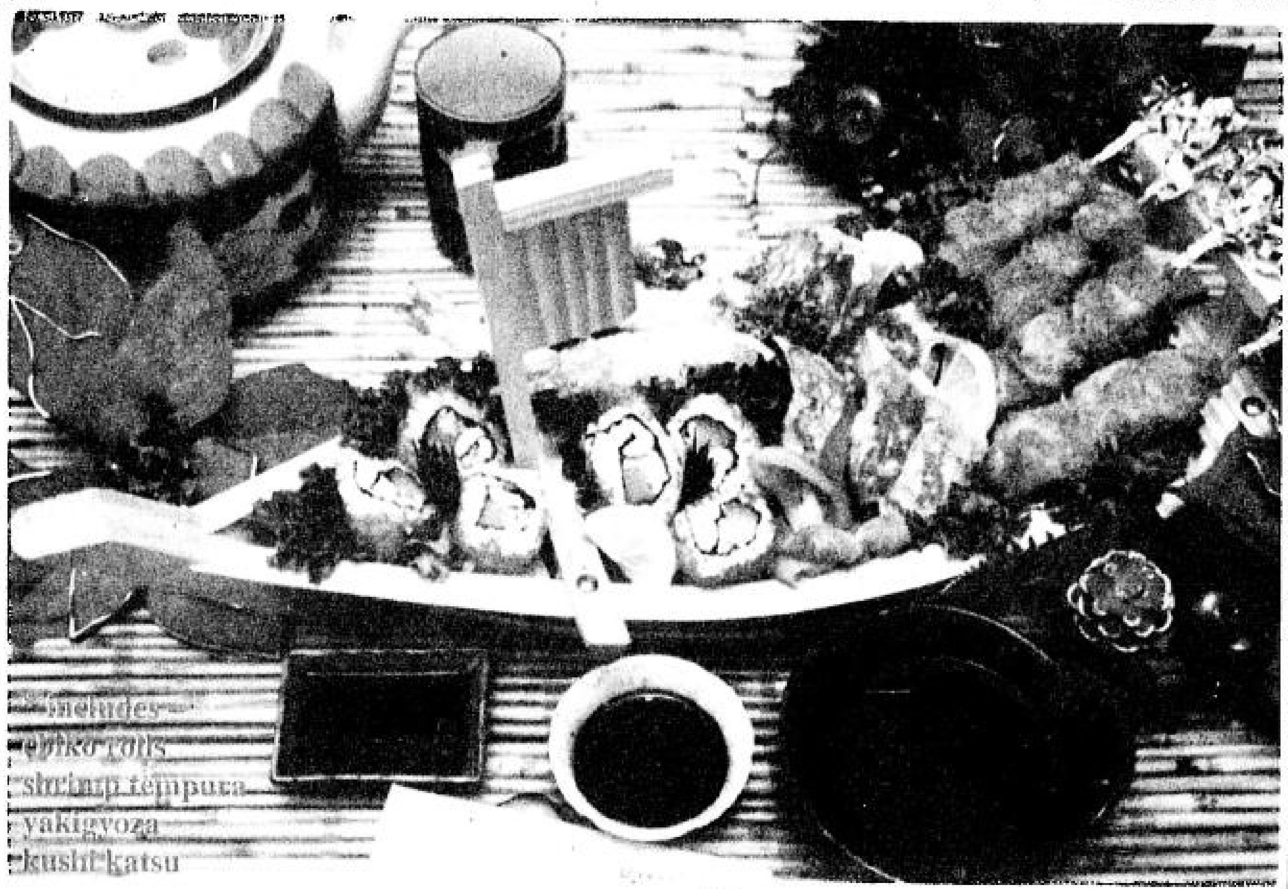


ROLL the wrapper halfway, fold both edges, and roll again.



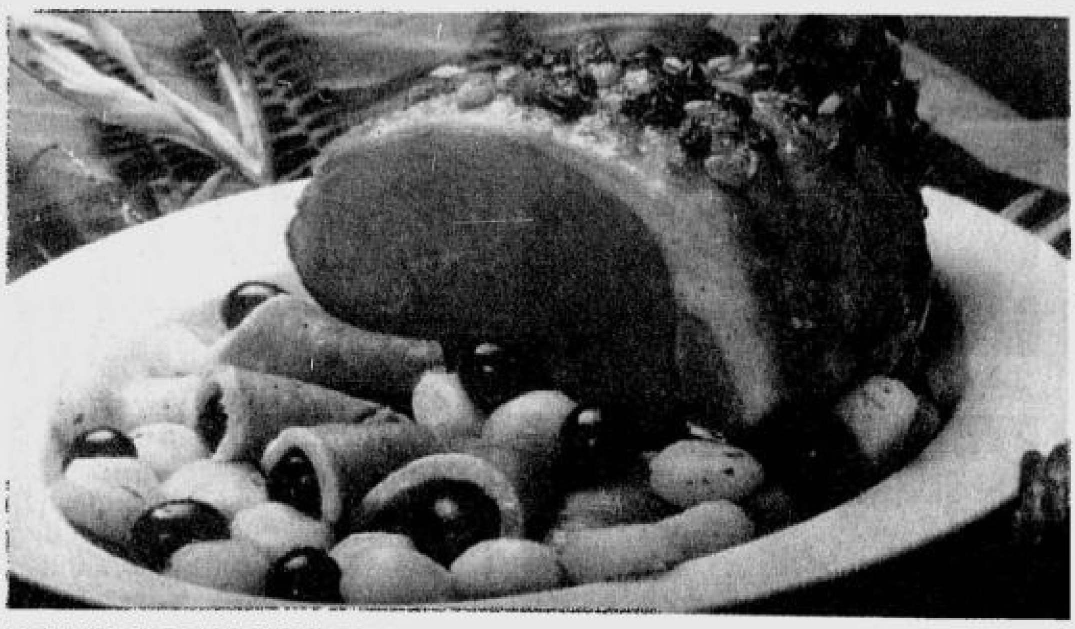
DEEP-FRY spring rolls till golden brown

Meri Kurisumasu!
(Merry Christmas!)
A time to share.
Enjoy our 'Meri Kurisumasu Boat Feast'* (good for 2-3 persons) for only ₱399+. From Dec. 14 to 31, 2001 only. Lunch and dinner.
Open on Christmas Day for lunch; New Year's Day, lunch and dinner.
31 YEARS OF SERVING FINE JAPANESE CUISINE
KIMPURA
JAPANESE RESTAURANT
MAKATI
2nd Level, Glorietta II, Ayala Center, Makati City
Tel. Nos. 893-2307, 892-4456
Open daily:11:30 AM – 2:30 PM; 6:00 PM – 10:30 PM
GREENHILLS
Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan
Tel. Nos. 721-8818, 721-8569, 721-0581
Open daily:10:30 AM – 2:30 PM; 5:30 PM – 10:30 PM



CHRISTMAS IS STILL MERRY WITH WENDY'S
BIG-A-BOOM
MEAL COMBOS!
Celebrate Christmas with lots of great-tasting food at very affordable prices! PLUS, have great gifts and more party bonus if you book your party with us!
CHOOSE FROM THESE FOUR BOOMING COMBOS!
BOOM! P69
•1 Juicy Hamburger
•2 Servings Super Value Spaghetti
•Large Softdrink
BOOM! Chicken & Macaroni Combo P69
•1 pc. Fried Chicken w/ gravy
•2 servings rice
•Macaroni Salad
•Large Softdrink
BOOM! P79
•1 pc. Fried Chicken w/ gravy
•2 servings Super Value Spaghetti
•Large Softdrink
BOOM! Chicken & Chili Rice Combo P89
•1 pc. Fried Chicken w/ gravy
•2 servings rice
•Chili con Carne bowl
•Large Softdrink
* Each combo is served in one container
BIG-A-BOOM PARTY BONUS
BONUS! FREE 30 Wendy's Coupon Booklet for every 30 orders of any of the combo meals.
Surprise gift pack for the party coordinators.
Second party bonus-get 5% worth of your party bill in gift certificates.
Refer- a -friend- get P100 gift certificate when your friend books a party.
Wendy's HAMBURGERS
HAVE BIG-A-BOOM MEAL COMBOS AT WENDY'S THIS CHRISTMAS!
Visit us or call 8095506 loc. 305 / 312
Also available for delivery (no softdrink included) at 533-33-33
Available for a limited time only.

FROM THE PRIVATE Kitchen comes a collection of holiday dishes and attractively packaged sauces and dips for entertaining or to give as presents: The perfectly brown Roast Beef of the most tender and juicy striploin, served with mushroom gravy; the Paella Fiesta is a traditional offering of saffron-flavored rice, done in olive oil, savory with real Chorizo de Bilbao and generously topped with crabs and prawns; deli items in attractively decorated bottles include Cream of Spinach with Salmon Sauce, Cream of Vegetables Sauce, Olive-laced Pasta Sauce and Salmon with Anchovies Spread. Other offer-ings are Chicken Liver Paté in Duck or Chicken Terrine, Crown Roast of Lamb or Pork, Pastel of Lengua or chicken and the very Spanish Cocido. Call 825-2759.



DON'T FORGET THE HAM

CDO offers five different shapes of hams each with different retail price. The most popular is the CDO Holiday Ham, boneless and seasoned in exotic herbs and spices. The pear-shaped ham is lean and juicy. The round-shaped *hamon de bola*, blended with Spanish seasonings, tastes sweet and spicy. The square-shaped ham is seasoned with American flavorings, glazed and topped with a rich coating of pineapple jelly. The bone-in-ham is cooked in the old Chinese tradition. To sustain the good quality of every CDO ham, the company makes sure that all materials, ingredients and processes used are in accordance with internationally recognized standards.

CRAVINGS has an array of holiday bars and nut pies ready for gift-giving plus coffee gift packs in tin cans with mugs thrown in from the Coffee Beanery.

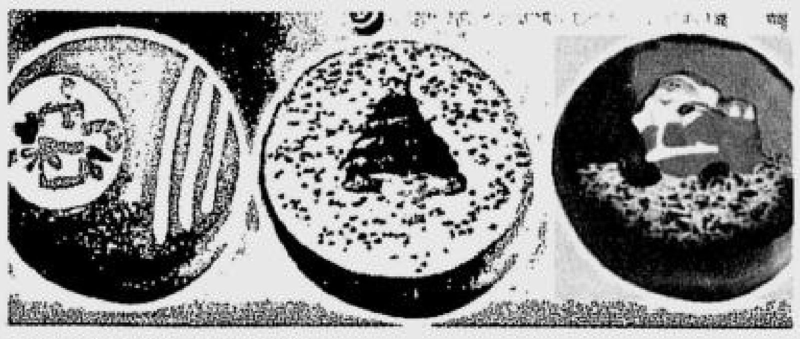
The sweet flavors of Christmas from our kitchen to yours

CHRISTMAS is a time of joyous celebration and warm feasts. It is also a time of giving. And the best gifts are those that come from the heart. Such gifts are personally created, bearing the special wishes of the giver. Cookies, brownies or cakes especially packed with recipe cards attached and adorned with beautiful bows make wonderful gifts.

Here are suggested baskets that can be given this Christmas: Breakfast tray, which contains Maya Hotcake Mixes, bottle of strawberry jam, jar of honey or syrup and bright-colored apron; brownie basket of Maya Chocolate Fudge Brownie Mix, Maya Butterscotch Brownie Mix, Maya Chocolate Fudge Brownie Oven Toaster Mix, pack of marshmallows, pack of assorted nuts and pack of coffee; cookie basket of Maya Oven Toaster Chocolate Crinkles Mixes, jar of slivered almonds, jar of walnuts, bottle of chocolate syrup, pack of candy sprinkles or choco-coated nuts/candies, box/pack of confectioners' sugar, jar of maraschino cherries and designed pot holders; *simbang gabi* treat in a tray has Maya Oven Toaster Bibingka Mixes, jar of *salabat* and salted eggs.

GIVE ITALIAN. Freshly -baked goodies from Italianni's include the popular Tuscan and focaccia breads and balsamic vinegar and olive oil dip especially packaged to spread the holiday cheer. Add a bottle of Citra or Vendange wine to bring a warm glow to a dear one's cheeks. How about boxes of Blueberry and Chocolate Muffins, Giant Chunky Choco Chip Cookies, Tiramisu, Tartufo and New York-Style Cheesecake? Italianni's offers free delivery of Christmas goodies within the Makati Commercial Center for a P5,000 minimum purchase. For corporate giveaways, check out Italianni's gift certificates in P100, P250, P500 and P1,000 denominations. The first 100 orders of the basket of Christmas goodies include a 375-ml bottle of Martini Asti Spumante courtesy of Jardine Caldbeck. Call 757-1323/1324. Italianni's Bakery and Café is located at the 2/L of Glorietta IV, Makati City. Opening in December is their newest branch in Alabang Town Center. Italianni's Restaurant will also open soon in Greenbelt Mall.

LOOK to the Old Swiss Inn for a variety of desserts. The Toblerone Chocolate Cheesecake is Old Swiss Inn's famous baked cheesecake with an indulgently generous blend of swirling pure Toblerone chocolate. Also, try the Toblerone White Chocolate Bread Pudding. Choose from favorite cookies such as Chocolate Crinkles (P100/dozen); Toblerone Treasures, the buttery walnut Russian teacake stuffed with a Toblerone triangle (P300/dozen); Toblerone Chocolate Crinkles, crinkles deliciously mixed with Toblerone chocolate chunks, (P250/dozen). The bar selection includes the Nutty Chocolate Bars, New Wave Lemon Squares, Champion Chip Bar, Zebra Bar. Available at Old Swiss Inn branches in Makati, Paco and the Bon Marchi outlet in Greenbelt, Makati. Call 818-8251 (Makati), 521-3002 (Paco) or 813-3262 (Bon Marchi Makati).



CHRISTMAS FANCIES

Spread good cheer with these Bavarian cream-filled treats in Christmas tree, Santa and candle designs from Dunkin' Donuts. For only P18.50, the Christmas Fancies are available at all participating outlets nationwide this month.

CASTILLIAN CHRISTMAS

Authentic Pollo Galantina, Jamon Serrano, Pollo Relleno, Bacalao, Quezo Manchego, Angulas, Turrones and other Spanish treats come in holiday baskets and boxes perfect for gift-giving from Las Paellas de Alba, located on Tomas Morato, QC (371-4588) and Alabang Zapote Road, Muntinlupa City (850-8824). For catering services, call 850-8824.

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A mix of Yuletide traditions live on at The Peninsula. From intimate Christmas dinners to the grandest New Year's Eve ball. To sumptuous holiday meals at Nielsen's, Mi Piace, Old Manila, and Spices. To chilling out at The Conservatory. Meet Santa or sing along to carols at The Lobby. For some truly delicious gifts, there's Exclusivités at The Pen or the Gingerbread House at Level 3 of Glorietta 4. To top it all, enjoy special room rates from ₱3,500++.

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Christmas Eve
• The Lobby Dinner Buffet •
• Old Manila Set Dinner Menu •
• Mi Piace Set Dinner Menu •
• Spices Set Dinner Menu •
• Nielsen's Dinner Buffet •

Christmas Day
• The Lobby Lunch and Dinner Regular
A La Carte and Lobby Christmas Specials •
• Old Manila Set Lunch and Dinner Menu •
• Mi Piace Set Lunch and Dinner Menu •
• Spices Set Lunch and Dinner Menu •
• Nielsen's Lunch and Dinner Buffet •

New Year's Eve
• The Lobby Gala Ball and Dinner Buffet:
The Lobby - Php 3,550;
Upper Lobby - Php 3,300;
Gallery - Php 3,050;
• Old Manila Set Dinner Menu •
• Mi Piace Set Dinner Menu •
• Spices Set Dinner Menu •
• Nielsen's Dinner Buffet •
• The Conservatory Set Dinner Menu •
• The Conservatory New Year's Eve Jam Party •

Corner of Ayala and Makati Avenues, 1226 Makati City, Metro Manila, Philippines • Tel: 887-2888, 810-3456 • Fax: 815-4825, 815-3402 • E-mail: tpm@peninsula.com • Website: www.peninsula.com

SWEET TEMPTATIONS

Keep Christmas tradition alive at any family gathering with gifts from The Aristocrat Bakeshop. Choose from homemade chocolate truffles, Consuelo's purse—a super rich chocolate concoction—cheesecakes, carrot cakes, Tres Leches and Honey Crunch; Sylvanas, assorted cake rolls, Lenguas de Gatos, choco chip cookies and bars, chocolate crinkles, oatmeal bars, pinwheel cookies, Food for the Gods and double chocolate and espresso brownies. The Aristocrat Bakeshop is located on Jupiter Street, Makati City.

HOLIDAY HAMPERS

Creamy chocolates, cheese ball, raisins, salad dressing, fruit cocktail, spaghetti and spaghetti sauce, cold cuts, sardines, snack items, coffee, juice, wine, plus a variety of other choice ingredients to add spice to your holiday table fare are packed in Yuletide baskets, reasonably priced at P600-P2,500 at the delicatessen section at the G/L Crossings Department Store. Wine options priced at P225-P500+ also come wrapped to go in jute wine bags or wooden rack with handle. Cross-ings Department Store is located at Shangri-La Plaza Mall on Edsa corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandalu-yong City, and now with newly opened branches on Rizal Ave-nue, Manila and Quezon Avenue, QC. Call 635-4410 to -13 or 635- 4402.

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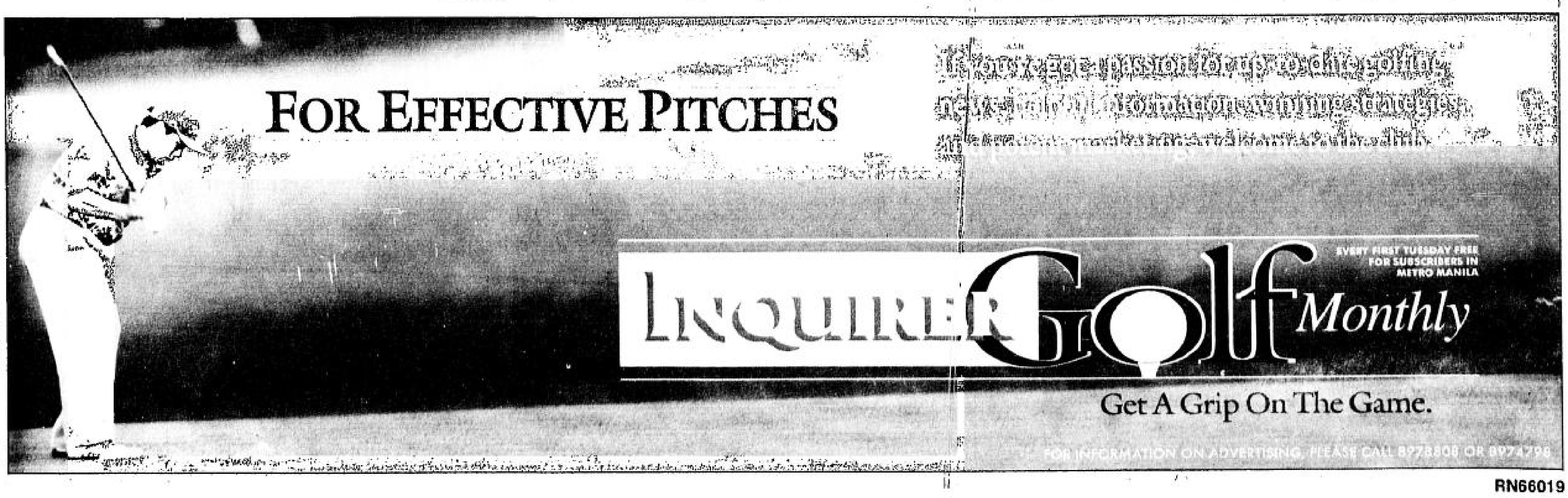

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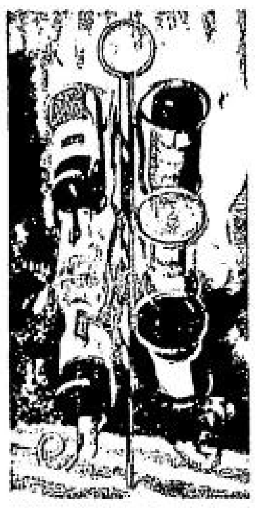
PIONEER. Santi's meat and cheese counter at its Yakal outlet

TERRY'S fabulous European wine collection

GOURMET goodness at Santi's

A quick guide to the best delicatessens in town


WINE tree from Blue Bacon

Deliverance from the season's harrassments come via the stand-alone delis, whether what you need is a good fast meal or a basket of gourmet treats to give away

(From page C1)

one of the prettiest restaurants in the metro. Quiet, cozy and private, the deli-cum-resto is often frequented by politicians and show biz denizens. The 7-year-old establishment is owned by partners Mike Prado and Boyd Deriquito, who seem to know each and every client by name. "We have a lot of regulars and they have all become friends," says Prado.

Blue Bacon's deli has a Chinese, Japanese, Thai and Pinoy corner. The last features delicacies from Danding Cojuanco's ECJ Farm in Negros whose *sinamak* vinegar is the best in town. The deli also offers an extensive wine collection and a full range of cold cuts and seafood. Blue Bacon sells the best, export quality tuna sashimi flown straight from General Santos City. Their Norwegian Smoked Salmon on a handcarved wooden fishboard with capers, dill sauce, pickled onions and fresh lemon (P1,800 per order) will surely be a welcome addition to any *noche buena* feast. Their delicious Tri-colored Cheese Terrine is a steal at P340 per tub.

Blue Bacon is the only deli in town that sells an Asian gourmet basket that carries some of the best delicacies from Thailand, Japan and the Philippines—*dulong*, Edo crackers, Tom Yum soup, Japanese mayo, Sencha green tea, ECJ *sinamak* spiced vinegar, Thai dried fish (the flower-like variety that is excellent for breakfast!), calamansi marmalade, wasabe, to name a few of the contents. Blue Bacon custom-makes gift baskets from as low as P350. The most expensive basket, at P4,295, tastefully arranged on an exclusively designed wicker and iron serving tray, contains US Angus Rib-Eye steak, Italian garlic sausage, smoked Norwegian salmon, Dijon mustard, dill sauce, capers, barbecue sauce and seasoning, instant mashed potatoes and a bottle of French Red Wine.

Located on Lantana Street, Cubao, QC (beside Boston Gallery). Call 721-2717.

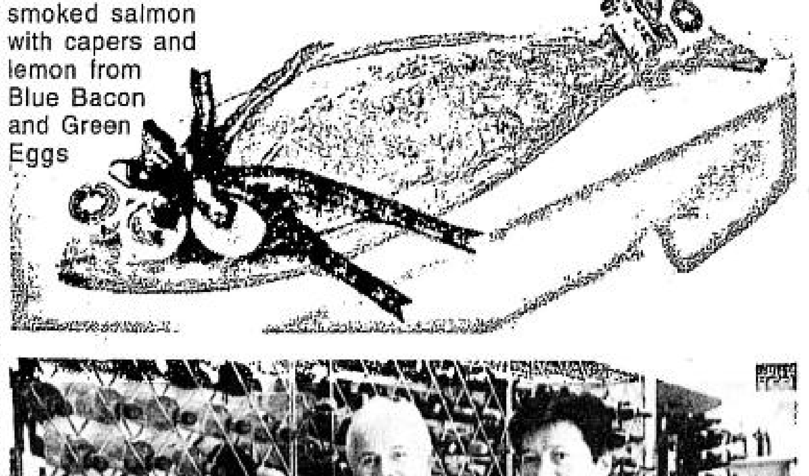
BEST OF ASIA. Gourmet treats from ECJ farms

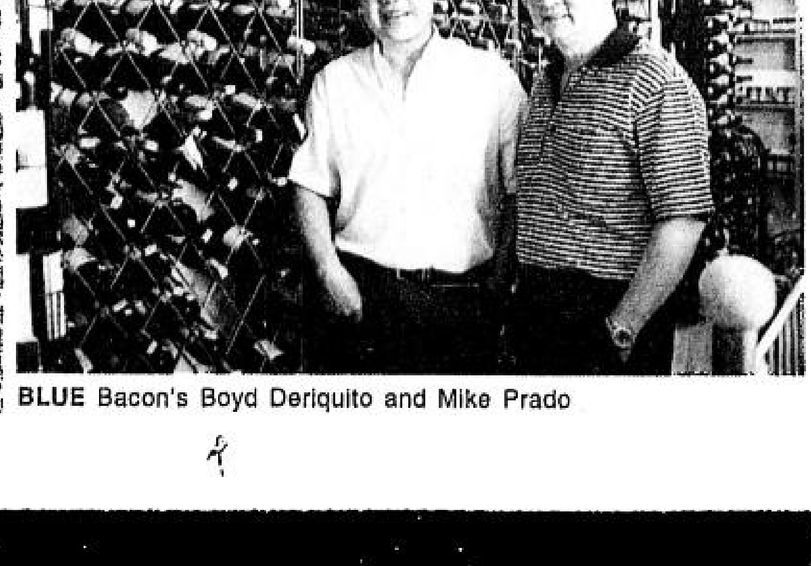
SANTI'S DELICATESSEN

The pioneer in the deli field, Santi's has been around for more than a decade and continues to grow and prosper. Before Santi's came to be, hotels and fine-dining restaurants were the only places in town where one could savor choice gourmet food. Now with seven outlets all over Metro Manila plus one in Tagaytay, Santi's deli is synonymous with excellent gourmet food. Founded by Werner Berger, Santi's supplies its discriminating clients, both local and foreign, with top-of-the-line cheese, wine, meats, bread, condiments and anything else a gourmand would need.

Its original store on Yakal Street in Makati is the biggest branch in the chain. Among its Christmas offerings are baskets filled with gourmet treats ranging in price from P500 upward. One can also, as in other delis around town, buy gourmet goodies in bulk and do their own gift baskets at home.

With its vast selection of gourmet treats from Europe and the rest of the world, it's easy to get lost among the goodies on display at Santi's. This pioneer in the deli field is also the only one with a website—www.santis-deli.com. Call 844-1154.


NORWEGIAN smoked salmon with capers and lemon from Blue Bacon and Green Eggs


BLUE Bacon's Boyd DerIquito and Mike Prado

TERRY SELECTION

Terry Selection has been in the business for only a little over a year, but is held in high esteem by gourmet foodies. Terry is owned by Juan Carlos de Terry, who has a Ph.D. in Oenology (the study of wine). Naturally, it boasts of a temperature-controlled cellar filled with the best European wines. In addition to this, they have the widest selection of cheese and cold cuts all flown weekly from Runjis, the mother of all markets in Paris.

"Runjis is like the central market for food from various parts of Europe and is very close to Orly airport. Thus, we are able to fly in our cheese (all 120 varieties of it) and our cold cuts," De Terry says. Boccardo, brie, cambozola, camembert, edam, emmental, feta, fondue, gouda, gruyere, marroille, raclette, stilton—name the cheese and surely Terry has it.

Terry Selection has a complete line of gourmet Spanish food from the basic capers, olives, mushrooms, tomatoes, *pimientos* and vinegar all the way to *jamon* and *paella*. They are the only deli in town that sells "instant," cook-it-yourself *paella*, complete with a matching *paellera* that, according to De Terry, is bought even by the Spanish restaurants in Spain.

"Our Bacalhao is much lauded here," he says. The deli also has—would you believe?—sugarless *turrones* from Delaviuda Spanish Nougat in consideration of their clients who have blood sugar problems.

With the widest cheese and cold cuts selection in the city, wine should not be far behind since De Terry is an oenologist. Top of the line wine from the best European vineyards—Spain, Italy, France—and even Chile and Australia are housed here, as well as labels not seen anywhere else owing to De Terry's networking with the various vineyards and wineries he has visited over the years.

Terry Selection also makes the most elegant gift baskets in coordination with Mabolo flower shop, which is owned by the family of De Terry's wife; these are priced from a low of P500 (one bottle of Cuvee Dulong White wine and French cookies with a lovely bromeliad plant in a beautiful wicker basket) to elaborate gift baskets that go as high as P5,000.

The 100-sq-m shop at Karrivin Plaza on Pasong Tamo is a haven for Spanish foodies. Call 844-1816.

ROX DELI POST

The village deli Rox Deli Post is, as it's owner Ben Roxas likes to call it, "your friendly hole in the wall deli." This cozy deli dishes out no-fuss homecooked meals in a setting reminiscent of Greenwich delicatessen's or typical delis you see on American sitcoms. Roxas has suppliers from all over who bring him the best in meat, cold cuts, pasta, wine, olive oil and other gourmet delicacies. With his staff, he puts together hand-painted baskets filled with basic gourmet treats that sell from P400 to P2,000.

Lord of his kitchen, Roxas likes to putter around his little deli and whips up the meanest *salpicao* and prawns thermidor this side of Quezon City. Like dining at home, portions are just right and presented in a simple manner. Roxas personally tends to his guests and makes suggestions. Guests at the deli normally sit down to a meal while waiting for their gift baskets to be assembled. There are no big display shelves or massive chillers here, folks—just a simple operation that thrives on its owner's passion for his products.

Located in Philam Village, West Avenue, QC. Call 925-7649.

BLONDIE'S DELI

If you are in search of a deli that has a downright homey appeal, then you've come to the right place. Blondie's Deli is the newest player in the deli game. The coffeeshop-deli is, for now at least, a mom-and-pop operation. Throw in two or three good-looking children and there's your service staff. Owned by Dan and Isabelle Mesina, Blondie's Deli is all-American. Its food is quite well-known and much in demand among American Women's Club members. Isabelle, who is of German and French parentage, spent the greater part of her life in California where she learned cooking from her mother. "Our corned beef is American style and every St. Patrick's day (in March) we always run out," she says smilingly. Isabelle's cherry pie is to die for and her bread pudding is simply heavenly. They also serve the best, no-fuss brewed coffee.

Blondie's sandwiches are gaining popularity among the C5 office crowd and the nearby villages, although Americans from all over the city have been known to drop by for some of Isabelle's products (sausages in particular). Blondie's is the only deli in town that sells homemade American country breakfast sausage, fresh corned beef and juicy and succulent Polish sausage plus Isabelle's own creation, tasty spicy Thai sausages.

The gift baskets here are quite unique in the sense that they are not what one would call, exotic, gourmet treats; instead, they hold ingredients for a meal that brings a taste of America to your table. Consider this: Blondie's Christmas Breakfast in a Basket (P800) with a 200-g pack of special gourmet coffee, six pieces of homemade Madeline pastries, a large loaf of lemon poppyseed or six pieces of muffin, a jar of marmalade and two mugs, or Christmas Dinner in a Basket (P1,200) with 1 kg of German potato salad, four pieces of smoked porkchops, 1/2 kg of sausages, 1 jar of Cajun Okra pickles, a carrot cake loaf and assorted breads and pastries. If you don't want to send in a whole breakfast or dinner basket, opt for the homemade cherry pie that's a sure winner—the cherries, not too sweet, just literally melt in your mouth.

Located on E. Rodriguez Jr. Avenue in bustling Libis (C5 to most people). Call 395-5150

(Next week: Hotel delicatessens)

E-mail the author at cbguballa@inquirer.com.ph

GOURMET ESSENTIALS. Ben Roxas at Deli Post

DOWN-HOME goodness at Blondie's

FAMILY FEAST. The Mesinas show off Blondie's gourmet baskets.

SAY CHEESE. That's oenologist Juan Carlos de Terry.

Innocent crimes

THE MAD TEA PARTY

Clinton Palanca

> 'My experiences with authority have almost always been negative . . . I have never in my life been aided by a policeman, but I have been detained, falsely accused, extorted and threatened by them

"CHEESE," the quote goes, "is the corpse of milk." In which case, we can add to the list of unflattering epithets used to describe me as a dairy nymphomaniac. I'm not a cheese connoisseur, though, those madmen who are to be found lurking in cheese shops with a bulge in their pants, or who go to great lengths to smuggle unpasteurized cheese across the customs border into America, which has a typically nannyish "it's-for-your-own-good" law against cheese made from unpasteurized milk. I will eat my fill while I'm travelling in France, but I once took a wheel of Munster home, and its smell insidiously permeated everything else in the suitcase, from my clothes to my books, and even added its extra note to the bouquet of scents in the bottle of Eau d'Hadrian I'd meant to give as a present.

But even when I'm not carrying cheese, pornography, or incendiary devices with blinking lights and a countdown timer, I always have a knot of fear whenever I approach the row of customs officials at our airport, all of them crouching with a predatory air while I try to choose the most benevolent-looking among them. Scenes from "Midnight Express" involuntarily flash through my mind. While I've never been dragged away into a windowless room, they are almost always insufferably rude, especially the men. I think that having one's possessions searched is already a humiliating experience, albeit admittedly necessary; the least that people who are employed to carry out this task can do is be polite. Meanwhile, passport control officials in the Philippines are almost always polite and indifferent; although everyone has their favorite horror stories about Immigrations officers in other countries.

The passport, incidentally, is a relatively recent invention, stemming from a 1915 law passed by the British government to deter spies and informants during the war. The law was never repealed after the war, and instead become an international fad. After the passport came the visa, which has turned into a valuable technique by which countries can exert their international dominance in a smug and bureaucratic manner.

It must give any republican civil servant looking out his window a warm fuzzy feeling of satisfaction to see the lines outside the US Embassy on Roxas Boulevard and the desperation with which Filipinos clamor for a chance to experience the American way of life, be it for a short stay, or for permanent emigration. I've stopped travelling to the United States altogether; but my European trips always begin with a bleary 8 a.m. visit to the various embassies. The French Embassy has one particularly cantankerous consul who delights in humiliating the applicants over a very clear and powerful public address system that reverberates through the packed waiting-room; she should apply to host "The Weakest Link": "You have one supporting document missing. Goodbye!" (To their credit, though, they surprisingly granted my request for a long-term visa; very much like Parisian restaurants, where the waiters are rude, but the food is worth it.) India, not surprisingly, not only requires a visa, but gives you a hard time attaining it; heaven forbid that any Filipino overstay and add to their population of 1.1 billion.

Negative experiences

In general, my experiences with authority have almost always been negative. This, more than any documentary about infanticide and rubbish-heap dwellers, is why I firmly place my political affiliations left of center. I have never in my life been aided by a policeman, but I have been detained, falsely accused, extorted and threatened by them. As a jelly-legged individual who can't lie with a straight face, I try to live as a good citizen: I pay all my employees salaries that shock other restaurant proprietors; I am meticulous with my tax declarations, and I comply with the seat-belt law (yet another nannyish bit of legislation that intrudes on my decision to be reckless with my life or not), even when I'm wearing a linen shirt.

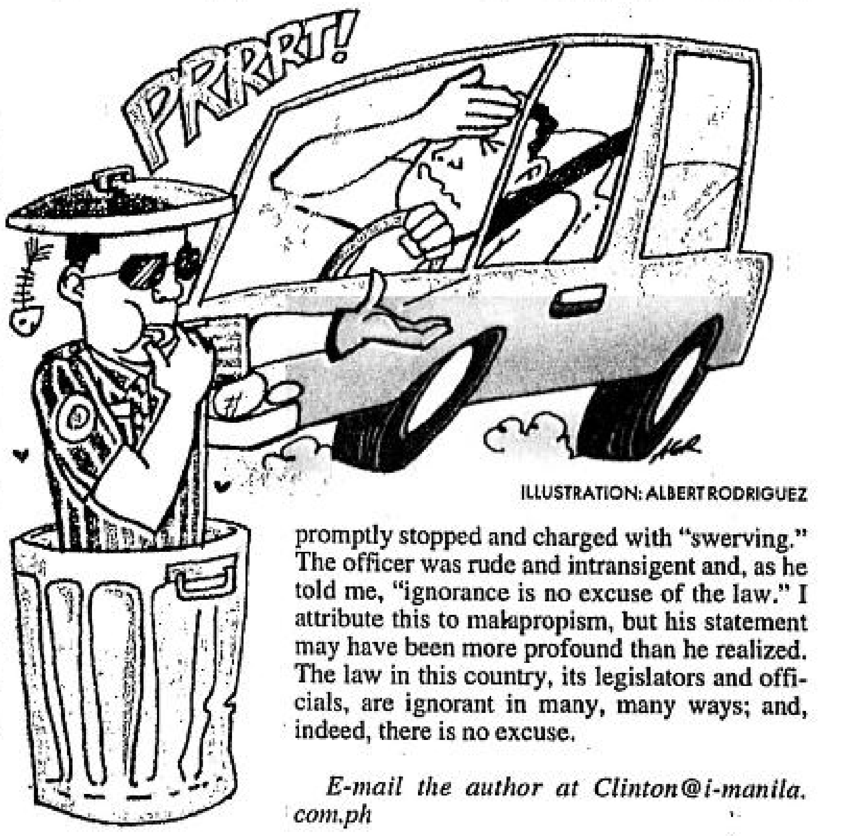
Having said that, I do admit that when it's 3 a.m on a Sunday, and I'm waiting at a stop light with a full bladder and a mysterious hooded figure bearing down on me, I will run the light. This sort of "innocent crime" is one of the staple clichés of political law debates, but it's also one which most of us have encountered on a regular personal basis (as opposed to the other classic dilemma, which involves a terrorist holding a gun to your head and asking you to shoot a defenseless woman (pregnant, recently divorced and terrified). I've seen people in Scandinavia patiently waiting at a red light in the dead of the night; but then these people, aside from their love for pickled herring which makes them strange to begin with, have socialized governments with extensive unemployment and health benefits, which allow them to grow old in security and comfort, eating pickled herring, open-faced sandwiches and adding arbitrary diacritical marks over the letter "O."

The failure of the government to keep up their side of the social contract is a fairly common and often abused excuse for lawlessness, anarchy, or downright criminal behavior. But in the Philippines, the "system" (by which I mean the mechanisms of power that are the circuitry of our society) is a highly complex one, in which the letter of the law plays a very small part. It can be invoked, but it is merely one of the tools employed by not only the power brokers, but practically anyone. In other words, the legislation passed by yawning congressmen (of which a large part would appear to consist of changing street names) has only a vague connection with the actual processes by which a certain order (not to be equated with justice) manages to fall into place.

Ignorance is no excuse

As a citizen of this country, one who carries his nationality and battered green passport with pride, I am obliged to carry out my day-to-day routines within the present system, even when the laws verge on the ridiculous or inane. On Fridays, for instance, my car is not allowed on the streets; nevertheless, like any other day, I have errands to run and must get around. So I simply go out, inevitably get stopped, and have my license confiscated and must pay a fine of P150. My friends are urging me to get a second car. A battered used car is at least P150,000; that would be equivalent to 1,000 traffic violation tickets, or 19 years' worth. Thus I find it more expedient to compute P600 a month into my living expenses which, compared to my latest Meralco bill, is almost insignificant. In 19 years, I could be run over by one of those drivers who enjoy charging at pedestrian lanes. I might win at a car lottery. The world might be hit by a meteorite. Or (least likely of all) this ludicrous law might be repealed.

So I do run the occasional red light, I have a bottle of absinthe (illegal at 70 percent alcohol), and used to own a rusted antique unregistered revolver, which they haven't made bullets for since 1887 ("used to," because I tried firing it the other day and the barrel fell off). The other day, on Edsa, a barrier suddenly materialized in front of me; I was stumped until I saw, far ahead, barely visible, a tiny sign that said "Airport Express lane." I moved to the next lane and was promptly stopped and charged with "swerving." The officer was rude and intransigent and, as he told me, "ignorance is no excuse of the law." I attribute this to malapropism, but his statement may have been more profound than he realized. The law in this country, its legislators and officials, are ignorant in many, many ways; and, indeed, there is no excuse.



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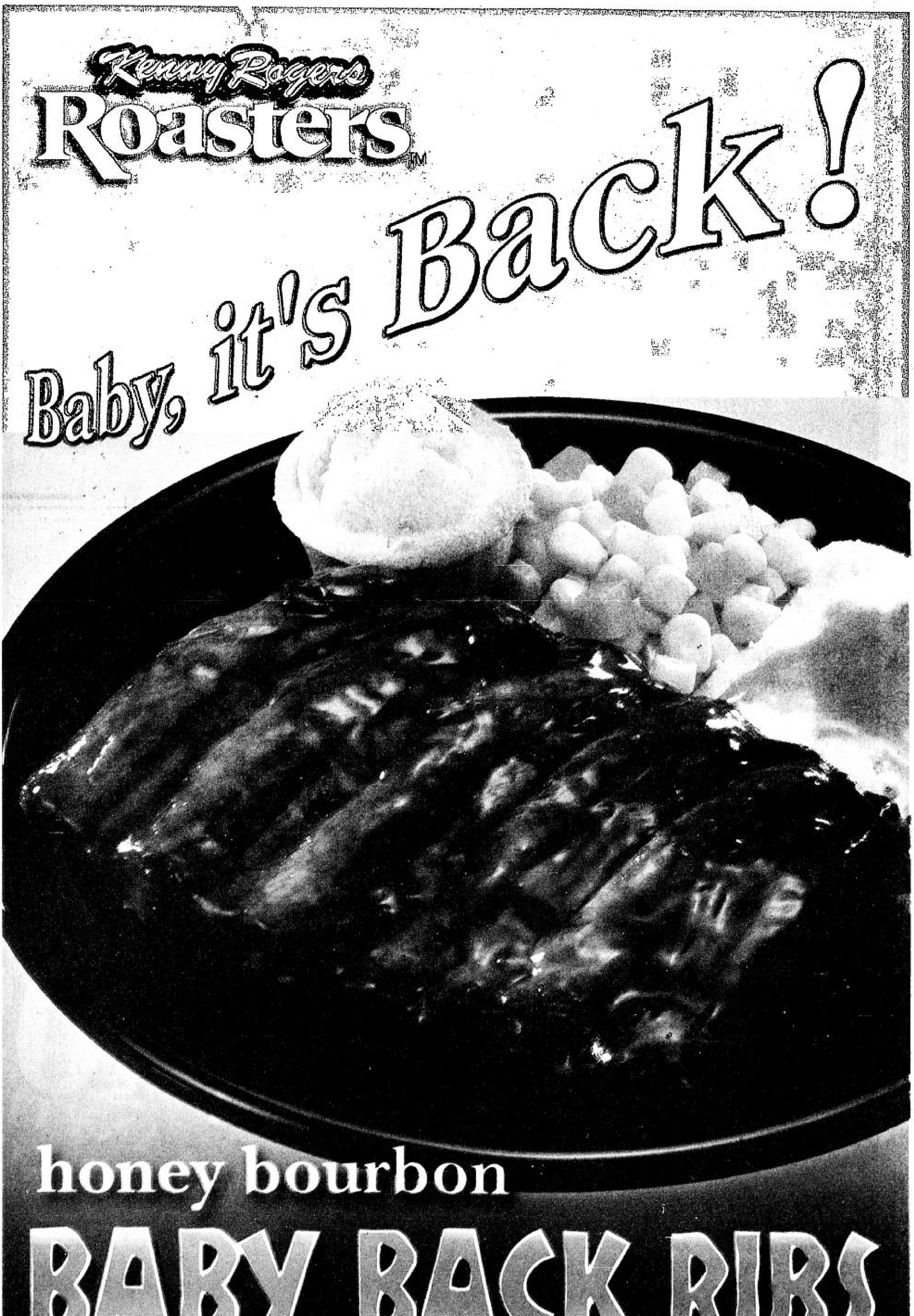

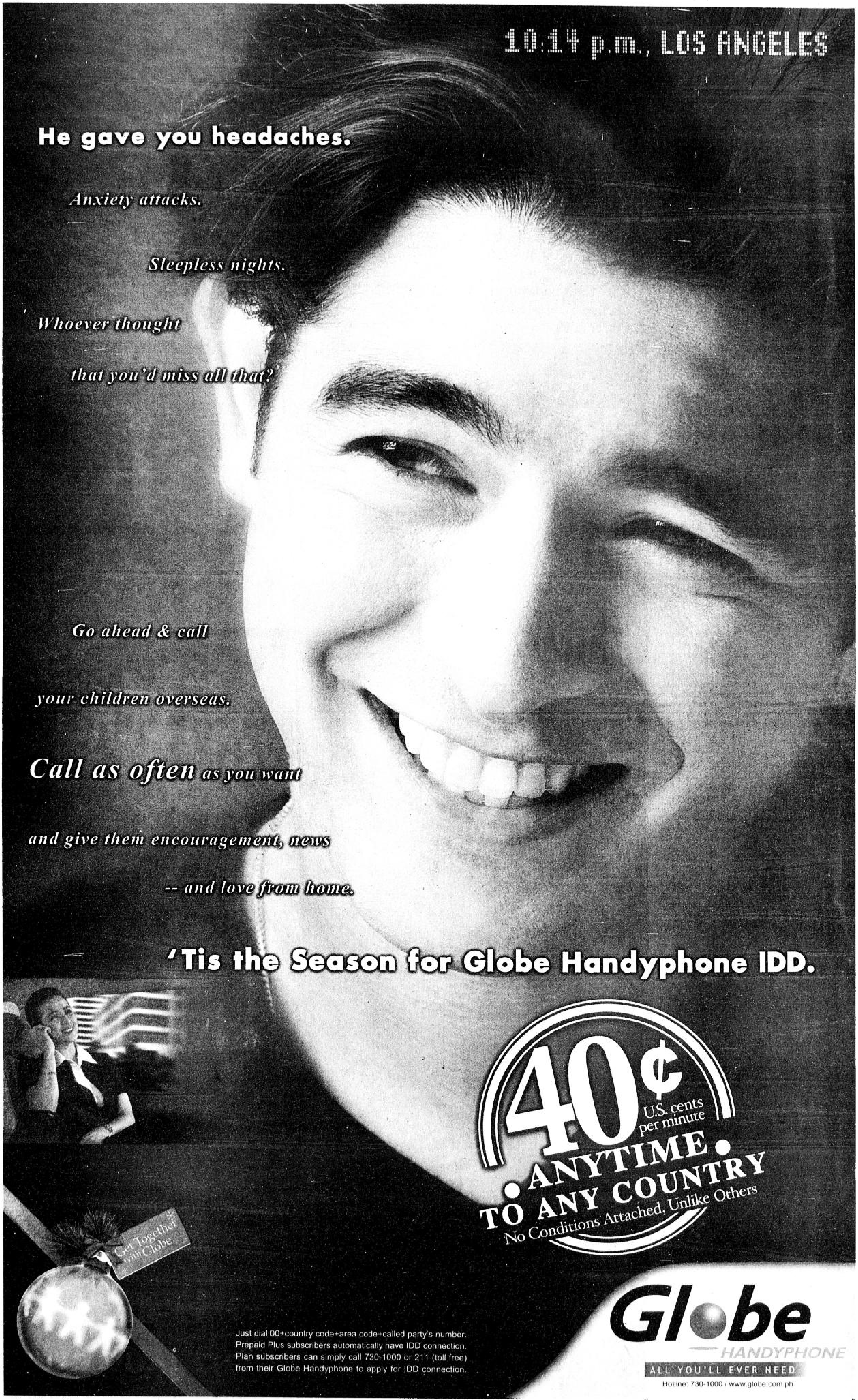

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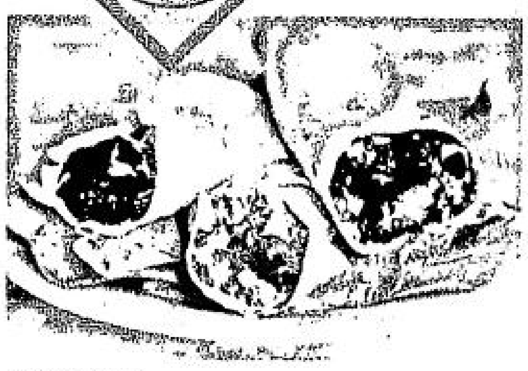

BURRITOS

A taqueria à la sunny California

By Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Roger Carpio

THERE are certain smells that can move diners. The pungency of roast pork, char-grilled beef, fried beans and charred chilies make you hungry in ways you don't fully understand. Such scents will lead you to a savory place that will satisfy your yearning for Mexican flavors.

At Mexicali, sniff the aroma of carnitas, tacos, burritos and enchiladas and slow down to relish the moment.

Located at Robinsons Place, Ermita, Manila; Glorietta, Ayala Center, Makati; and Megamall A, Mandaluyong, Mexicali was established in 1993 by siblings Dixie and Chiqui Mabanta. This cozy restaurant, which was inspired by taquerias (taco parlors) in San Francisco, exalts the peasant dishes and street foods of Mexico.

First-timers at Mexicali are encouraged to

A TAQUERIA/p.D2

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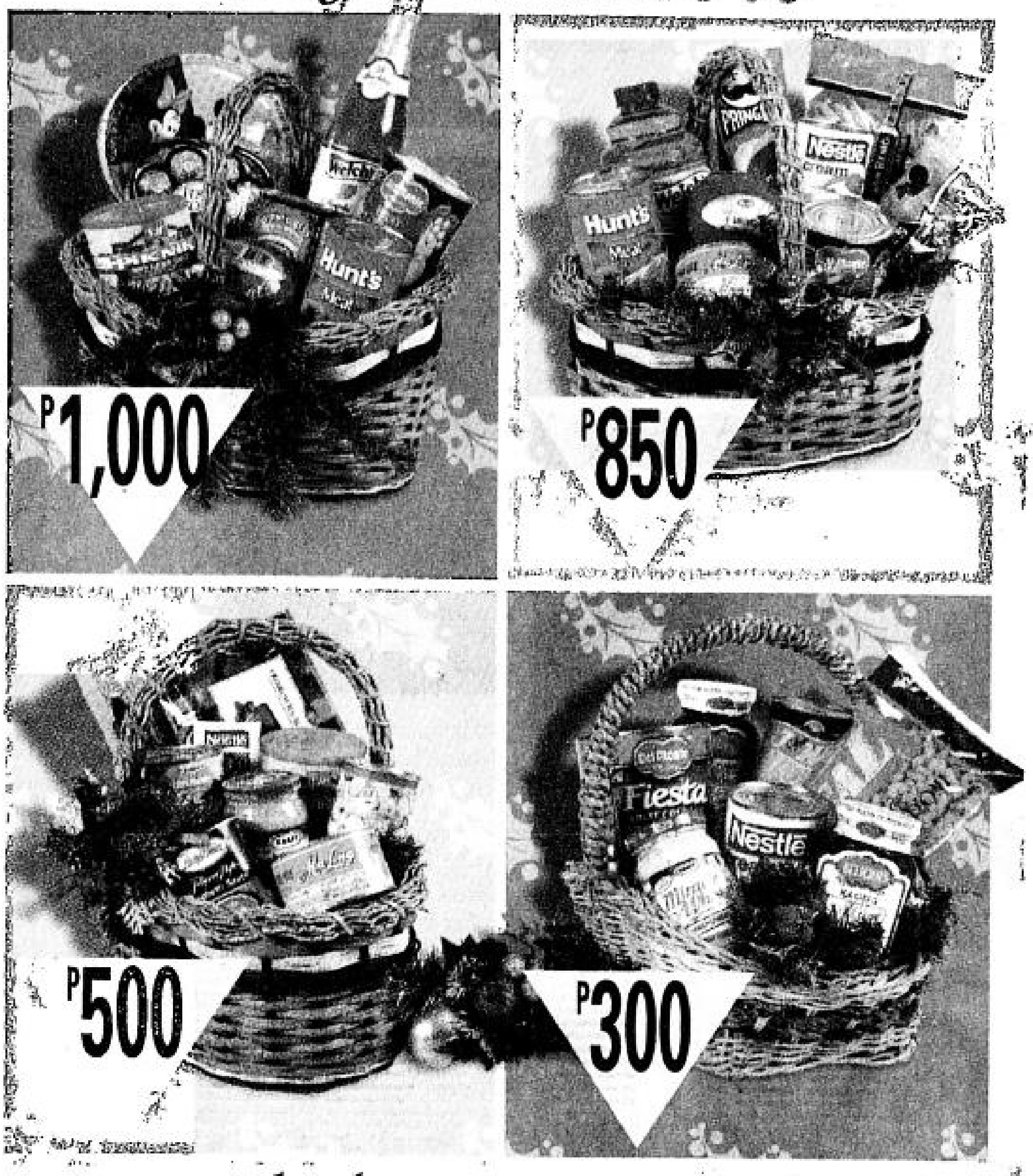

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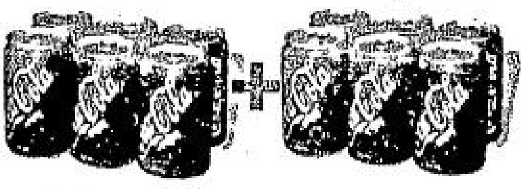

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Bored? Crossover to theme parties

CROSSOVER's monthly fun-to-the-max themed parties get better and better. It recently took a trip down memory lane and returned to the time of bell bottoms, paisley and Afros with "Let the Sunshine In," an all-night retro party held at Makati hot spot Wherelse.

The saucy '70s reigned supreme, highlighted by a fashion show of the most retro-defining clothes. Fat Session also got everybody feet tapping with their high-energy musical performance. Veteran Crossover party hosts Ria and Karen kept things lively with their constant banter and fun games and prizes.

Groovy party people included Crossover's COO Louie Villar, super singer Jaya, Iloilo's favorite son Bobby Roxas, Elaine Rivilla, Paolo Quiros, Malou Chipeco and daughter Rissa, Carlo Pineda, Chad Diaz (whom everyone should thank for the ultra-glam decor) and Saripaz Villar-Tan.

Also seen enjoying the retro rush were Tony and Marilen Guisande, Rene Datu, Nante Malana, Romy and Carmen Rojas, Ces Jacinto and Beng del Rosario. Adding more flair were gorgeous models Derek Ramsey and Robbie Mananquil (both endorsers of Oxygen), Gemma Marquez, Cesar Alex, Alvin Degamo, Luke McCain, Lucia Santiago, Baba Parma, Maricris Perez, Charmaine Palermo, Princess Sarrate, Aina Caliza and Collette Centeno.

Meanwhile, guests were ecstatic to be blacklisted at Dish for Crossover's Black Party, another installment in the theme party series.

And how could EJ Litton and Philip Cu-Unjeng miss the party at their own place? Their wives Tess Litton and Tricia Cu-Unjeng joined them as well, as did Tricia's best friend, former model Annette Coronel-Cruz (who sang with LOC), Anton Barretto, Grace Barbers, Leah Puyat, Angelette Calero, Eds Genuino, Anonymous' Tina and Ricco Ocampo and The Kitchen's Beng and Rikki Dee completed the glamorous picture.

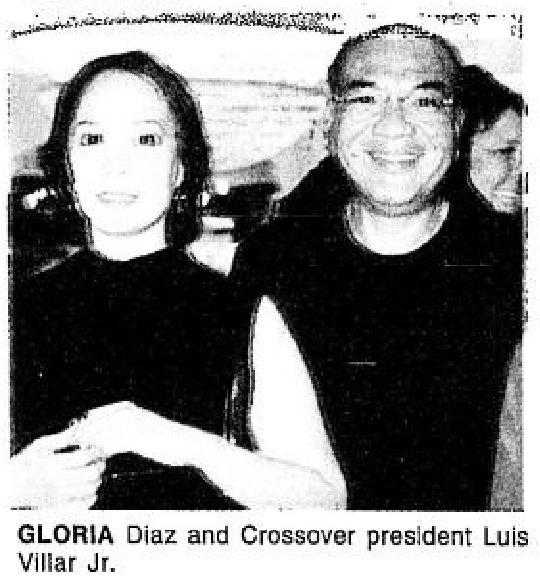
Some of those seen enjoying the night's black magic were fashion designers Rajo Laurel and Pepito Albert—who came in with Mike Sandoval and Lampel Luis; Carlo Jequinto, Puey Quinones and Dennis Lustico, who all came in with Jojie Loren.

Tessa Prieto-Valdes won applause and award in her spider-in-the-web costume. Leica Carpo, Jojie Dingcong, Pepper Teehankee, Alvin Degamo, Cesar Alex, Gloria Diaz, Eric Quizon, Nanette Medved-Po and husband Chris Po and Lani Misalucha were there, too.

THE CROSSOVER FAMILY. Elaine Rivilla, Monica Chipeco, Carlo Pineda, Louie Villar, Rosselle Santiago and Rissa Chipeco

ANTON Baretto, Leica Carpo, Rajo Laurel and Tessa Prieto-Valdes

OXYGEN'S image model Derek Ramsay with Collete Centeno



GLORIA Diaz and Crossover president Luis Villar Jr.

COLLETE Centeno and friends

GABBY Santiago, Yssa Villar, Joy Melicor, Marissa Melicor, Chuchi Villar and Sonny Melicor

CROSSOVERS Chad Diaz, Rosselle Santiago, Rissa Chipeco, Bobby Roxas and Nante Malana

FRANCIS and Mary Anne Lumen

SEN. Joker Arroyo

Celebrity house guests

SINCE the namesake restaurant of Spanish chef Señor Jesus Armas first opened, appreciation for Spanish cuisine has turned into a craving among its regular clientele.

"I keep coming back for their *angulas*, *paella*, crabs and *chorizo*," socialite Olga Severino Martel says. "Aside from the food, I find the place cozy and the staff accommodating and friendly."

FELICITO Payumo

Both restaurants in Malate and Makati have the same interiors (though the one in Makati is more spacious) and the same wide-ranging menu. The place emulates a Spanish *casa* that brings about a certain European country feel, allowing all our other senses to experience and relish the good stuff it offers.

Politicians also have something to say about the place and its fare. Says Sen. Joker Arroyo, "My favorites are the crabs and *paella* and I'd definitely recommend them because they're so good!" Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon adds: "I like the crabs, *paella*, *angulas*, *chorizo*, Casa Armas roast chicken, *boquerones* and *cochinillo*. Casa Armas also has a great ambience."

The *cochinillo* is what we might call *lechon* in our native tongue. But this Casa Armas specialty is way more delicious as it is meticulously prepared from a 21-day old piglet that has eaten nothing but milk (that's why it is often called *lechon de leche)*.

Another favorite is the Iberian Chicken (an Andriatico Armas recipe), a whole chicken marinated and cooked in olive oil, herbs and spices. It is not found in the menu but guests can order and try it. It will keep you coming back for it just as NBC president Francis Lumen and wife Mary Ann do.

And what would a Spanish restaurant be without *paellas*? Casa Armas offers only three kinds—Paella Negra, Paella Valenciana and Paella Marinera—but all three are house specialties. The Valenciana is made with chicken, seafood, pork and vegetables; the Marinera is made with different seafoods; and the Negra cooked in black squid ink. Most regulars, including Frank Provost owner Baby Cruz, Angel Aquino and Felicito Payumo, make it a point to always include *paella* in their orders.

Casa Armas is at 132 Jupiter St., Bel-Air Village, Makati. It is open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for lunch and from 6-11:30 p.m. for dinner. Call 897-3605 or 897-3542.

"For Ortigas, Greenhills and Quezon City residents, Casa Armas is opening this month at the Podium ADS Avenue corner Dona Julia Vargas Street, Ortigas Center.

IT was a night of tortillas, tequila and everything Mexican at the Hotel Inter-Continental Manila's opening of Mexican photographer Ignacio "Nacho" Lopez's exhibit "Nostalgias de Nacho Lopez" with (from left) hotel GM Michael Hermann, Ambassador Christian Krepela of Austria, Ms Mariana Hubbard, wife of Ambassador Enrique Hubbard of Mexico, and artist Manuel Baldemor.

A taqueria à la sunny California

(From page D1)

try a burrito, with its mouth-watering choices of roast pork, BBQ chicken, BBQ pork, ground beef, grilled vegetable, grilled steak, baja fish and grilled shrimp, combined with fresh salsa, fried beans, Mexican rice, cheese and sour cream wrapped in freshly hand-rolled flour tortilla.

Try the oven-baked enchiladas, with choice fillings of chicken, white cheese and beef. If you want a light snack, go for quesadilla, grilled cheese sandwich eaten with grilled meat or vegetables, toasted over a hot griddle and served with two salsas and a cilantro aioli. Or taste fajitas, chargrilled beef tenderloin or boneless chicken sizzling over a bed of roasted bed peppers and onions, served with guacamole, cheddar cheese, sour cream and fresh flour tortillas to wrap the lot in.

Have a little "ole!" with Fish Taco, a Baja Californian recipe of crisp-fried fish topped with fresh greens, salsa and garlic sauce, wrapped in soft corn tortilla.

Beguiling dishes

Mexicali food is colorful: approached with such conceits as Chile Verde (Mexican pork stew with green chile sauce), Carne Frita Dinner (thin beef fillet, served with Mexican rice and house salad), Camarones al Mojo de Ajo (garlic shrimps sizzling in sauce of garlic cloves, spices, lime and served with rice, corn and red pepper salad), Flautas (mozzarella cheese and jalapenos in flute-shaped tortilla tubes, served with red salsa), Sopa de Lima (clear soup with chicken bits, lime, cilantro and chile) and Lentil Soup.

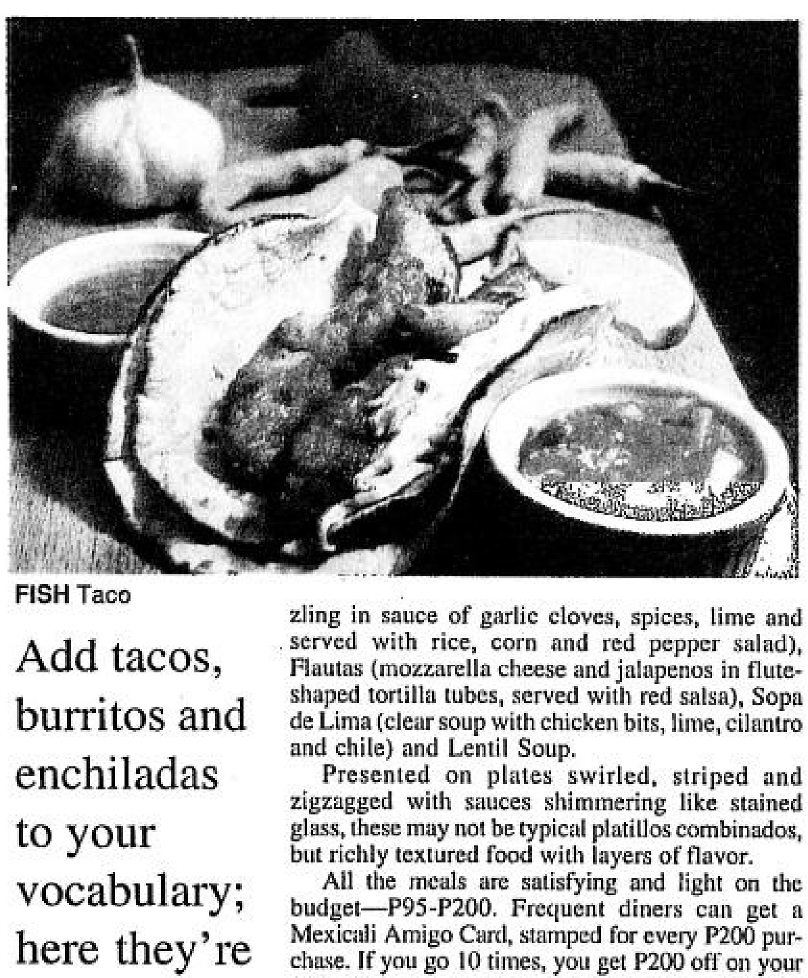
Presented on plates swirled, striped and zigzagged with sauces shimmering like stained glass, these may not be typical platillos combinados, but richly textured food with layers of flavor.

All the meals are satisfying and light on the budget—P95-P200. Frequent diners can get a Mexicali Amigo Card, stamped for every P200 purchase. If you go 10 times, you get P200 off on your 11th visit. You can also enjoy the restaurant's party packages, worth P110, P140, P150, P175 and P190 per plate. Call 718-2479 and 718-2486.

You may initially arrive at Mexicali as a skeptic resistant to the idea of contemporary Mexican cooking, but you'll leave thinking, wow, it's about time.

E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph

Add tacos, burritos and enchiladas to your vocabulary; here they're done the San Francisco way

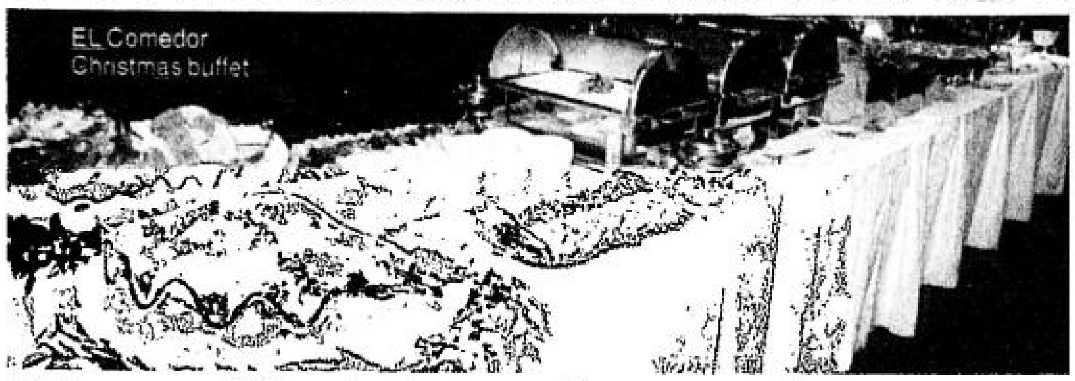


FISH Taco

QUESADILLAS

CARNE Frita Dinner

MEXICALI at Robinsons Place, Ermita, Manila



EL Comedor Christmas buffet

Pinoy Christmas is worth . . .

(From page D4)

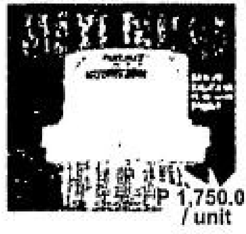
Natillas à la Madrilena (Spanish Crème Brulée); Rum Butter Cake, Pasteles de Lengua y Pollo, and many others. If you don't wish to go out for Christmas, they can bring it to you. (Call 892-5071, fax 893-2518, e-mail elcomedor@mydestiny.net.)

The mother-and-daughter team, Marilen and Tina Lopez, has charge of the restaurant (founded by mother/grandmother Lourding del Rosario), the catering and the orders. The restaurant currently features Sunday lunch buffets with a variety of *tapas*, *paellas*, salads, pastas, roasts and especially the famous *cochinillo asado* (roast suckling pig), so tender it is sliced with the edge of a plate.

New on the repertoire is the Lechon Macao, a blending of the Filipino *lechon* and the Chinese Peking Duck service. Tender pieces of *lechon* are cut off the roast and wrapped in pancakes as Peking Duck, with cucumbers and leeks, and five sauces: orange Hoisin, Lechon Sauce, Ginger, Garlic and Oil, Peanut Sauce and Tamarind Sauce. This is not available at the restaurant, but may be ordered by special request for cocktails and the like.

Polly Owyong's roast goose, from the Chinese (remember Yeung Kee in Hong Kong?) and British traditions (remember Bob Cratchit and his family in Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol") is now available from her company, called The Classic Roast (formerly Woodshed Roast), along with the Prime Roast duck (with roast duck *siopao*) and duck liver *paté*. The goose is crisp-skinned, tender, succulent and served with Hoisin and Orange sauces. Great. (Call 687-4822, 631-0861, (0917) 837-6400 or (0917) 536-0881. Address: 30 Sampaguita St., Valle Verde 2, Pasig City.)

May your Christmas be delicious, pleasurable and richly blest.



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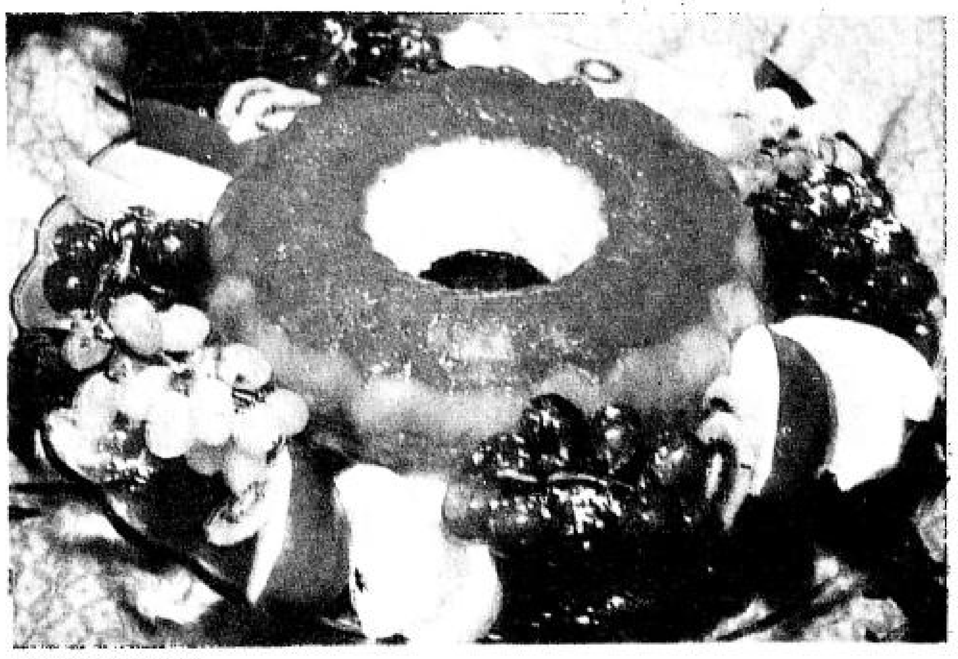


BREAD Pudding

We borrowed customs from Spain— the 'belen,' the nine Misas de Gallo . . . and very especially all the food of celebration

PAELLA à la Valencia

Pinoy Christmas is worth coming home for

IN GOOD TASTE

Doreen G. Fernandez

"THE LONGEST Christmas in the world," we say of ours. "Worth coming home for." It is individual and communal, traditional and eclectic, religious and a feast. It all comes from the Sacred Birth, of course, but we have found a myriad ways to express our gratitude and joy.

The basic Filipino Christmas package is Christian, since the feast came with the Spanish conquest and Christianization. We borrowed customs from Spain—the *belen*, the nine Misas de Gallo or *simbang gabi*, the singing of *villancicos* ("*Vamos, pastures, vamos; vamos a Belen...*"), and very especially all the food of celebration. The language of our traditional Christmas is Spanish: *gallina rellenada, pavo embuchado, queso de bola, ensaimada, jamon China/en funda/azucarada, chocolate, uvas, manzanas, naranjas, nueces, turrones de Alicante, membrillo*, and more.

This is elite food from Spanish tables, and humbler fare is often carved out of such a feast—a few dishes, humbler adaptations without the olive oil, wine and richness. For most, however, Christmas does not seem right without rosy-pink slices of ham edged with sugar-rimmed fat; or capons stuffed with Oxford sausages, pork, olives, even truffles; or sugary, cheese-sprinkled *ensaimadas* to dip into thick hot chocolate ("E" for *espeso* or thick; "A" for *aguado* or watered); or fragrant apples and oranges.

And how do humbler tables fare? They feature the best they can afford: a chicken, a bit of *lechon*, and whatever else is good and favored by family tastes and budgets. Here enter native and other related delicacies.

The rice harvest, which occurs about the same time as Christmas, has been celebrated long before Spanish colonization with food from the native repertoire: *bibingka, suman, puto bumbong, kutsinta, puto maya, minoron*—cakes of rice and coconut milk and sugar—eased by the sweet hot taste of *salabat* or ginger brew—heaven on a chilly night, after a mass with violins and percussion, and a walk through a food-crowded churchyard blazing with star lanterns (*parol*).

So this is the Filipino input into the Christmas that begins officially on Dec. 16, and should end on Jan. 6, Twelfth Night—but does not. It is too much fun to go on giving and receiving gifts, seeing family and friends, singing and putting on religious plays like the "Panunuluyan," "Niños Inocentes" and "Tatlong Hari," being on holiday in the spirit, in nostalgia, in the heart.

Chinese influences are seen in the festive noodle, the *pansit* for long life and family sharing. American colonization also made contributions to Christmas: fruitcakes, Santa Claus, cookies and gingerbread men, Christmas cards and wrappers and plays. And so did global winds, wafting into our culture the fragrance and tastes of German *stöllen*, French *bûche-de-Noel* and the British roast goose.

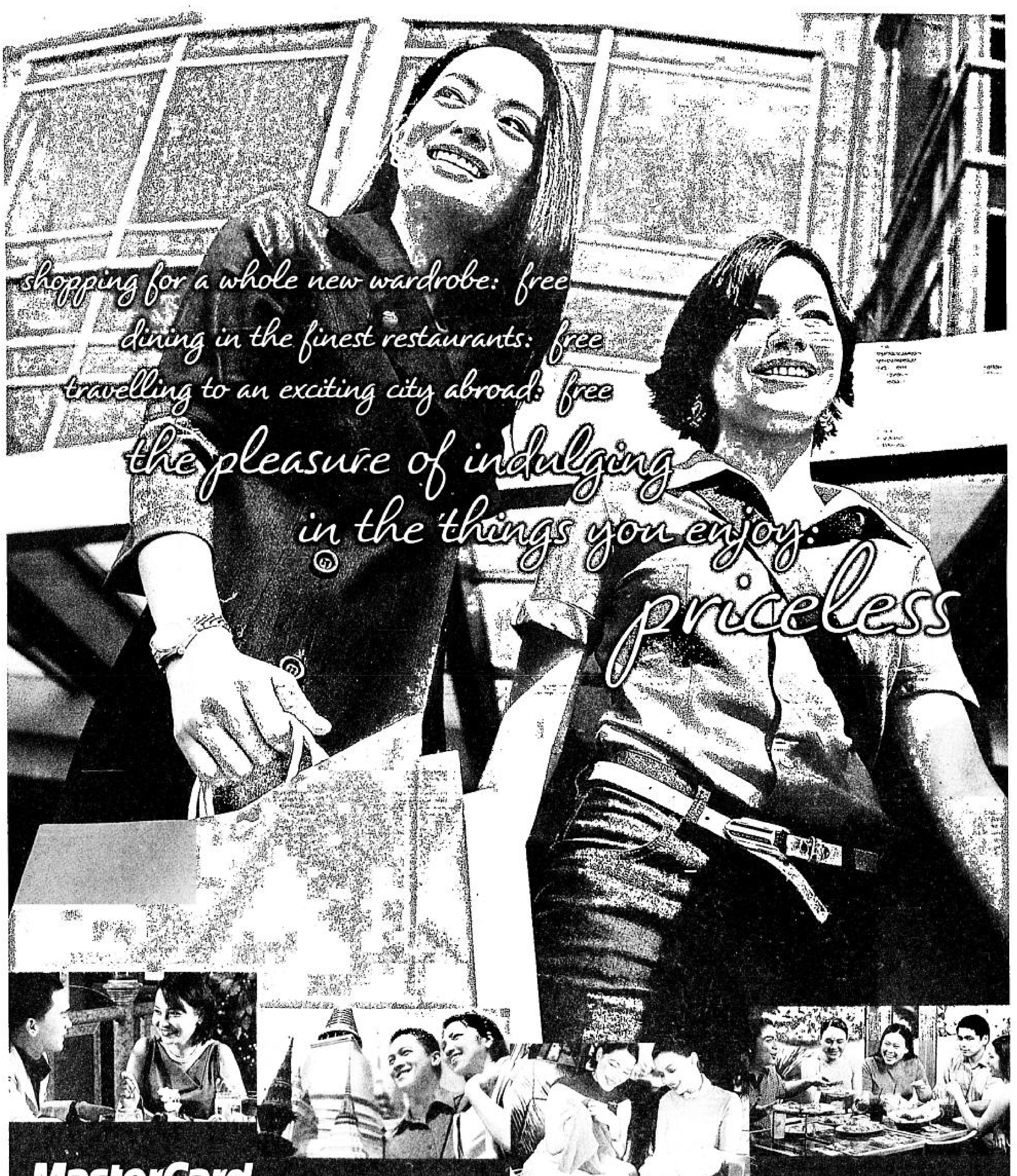
No one asks if this is legal or legit—it happens, because we each, and each of our families, endeavor to recreate Christmas meaningfully each year. We want to hold on to the central holiness of Christ's birth, to the warmth of family reunions and celebrations, to the giving of each other, to each other in Christ's love.

Give food for Christmas

It is therefore a time of food that speaks volumes about our history and our regard for each other. El Comedor, for example, has a Holiday Season Food List to fill up for orders of: Boneless Honey-Glazed Ham; Chicken Relleno with Gravy; Chicken Galantina; Paellas Valenciana, Negra, Bacalao, Vegetarian and Seafood; Canelones; Christmas Bread Pudding;

PINOY/ p.D3

ENGAÑA bolos



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2nd Monthly Draw: Feb. 15, 2002 (33 winners) • Rustan's Gift Certificates worth ₱10,000 each (8 winners) • Dish Gift Certificates worth ₱7,000 each (2 winners) • Old Manila Gift Certificates worth ₱7,000 each (2 winners) • Tivoli Grill Gift Certificates worth ₱7,000 each (2 winners) • Benkay Gift Certificates worth ₱7,000 each (2 winners) • Bocarinos Gift Certificates worth ₱7,000 each (2 winners) • Cash Credits worth ₱5,000 each (15 winners)

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